



The Canterbury Poets.

EDITED BY WILLIAM SHARP.

SCOTT'S POETICAL WORKS.

*, FOR FULL LIST OF THE VOLUMES IN THIS SERIES,
SEE CATALOGUE AT END OF BOOK.

THE POETICAL WORKS
OF SIR WALTER SCOTT,
WITH PREFATORY NOTICE, BIO-
GRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL. BY
WILLIAM SHARP.

ORIGINAL BALLADS.
THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.
MARMION.

W. H. Scroggie Limited.

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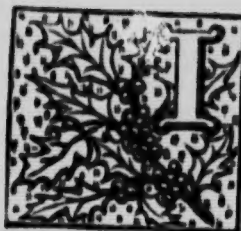
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Introductory Notice.



IT may be safely asserted that no writer ever exercised a more immediate and beneficial influence on the welfare of his countrymen than did Sir Walter Scott. If ever any wielder of the pen, prose writer or poet, deserved a great national tribute, it was he who brought into sympathetic union two peoples living apart in one small country ; who stirred into an ardent and not impermanent flame a somewhat dispirited national pride ; who brought wealth practically beyond calculation to a land formerly one of the poorest in Europe ; who made Scotland the goal of thousands from all parts of the globe, as, indeed, it remains to this day ; and who bequeathed to the whole civilised world a noble legacy of great works. He was essentially a representative man. Many will call to mind Carlyle's estimate of him—"No Scotchman of his time was more entirely Scotch than Walter Scott ;

the good and the not so good, which all Scotchmen inherit, ran through every fibre of him ;" and certainly, if ever a nation found expression in one man it was in the case of Scotland and Scott. There has been nothing to compare herewith in the past, and, as is plainly manifest, it is altogether improbable that there will be such another instance in the future.

To realise the true greatness of the subject of this memoir, it is necessary to have at least some superficial knowledge of Scotland as it was at the close of the eighteenth century. Small country as it is, it was then more of a *terra incognita* to southerners, and so far as the Highlands were concerned, to the Lowland Scotch themselves, than nowadays is Australia or New Zealand. The Highlands constituted, to all intents and purposes, a separate state, in many respects a hostile one ; for though the days of Roderick Dhu were over, there still lingered among the Lowland peasantry a deep suspicion and dislike, mingled with angry contempt, of their Celtic neighbours. We are told that there is no such race extant as the pure Celtic ; but howsoever this may be, we are accustomed to regard as Celts the Gaelic-speaking populations of Ireland and Scotland ; and it was this Celtic survival that was steadily dwindling away when the genius of one man arrested its retrogression as with the wave of a magic wand. Then came the Peninsular campaign, where the clansmen charged on the battlefields side by side with the men of Clydes-

dale and the Lothians, until a time came when an Armstrong or Elliott, a Morton or Maxwell, called themselves in common with the Camerons, Macleods, and Macdonalds, simply Scotchmen, instead of Borderers or Gaels.

It is just about a century since Scott, while an apprentice-at-law in Edinburgh, having to go on a legal errand into the Highlands in connection with some non-rent-paying Maclarens, was accompanied, as a matter of course, by an escort of a sergeant and six soldiers. That the escort proved quite unnecessary is not to the point ; the fact of its having been considered advisable being quite eloquent enough a commentary on the civilisation of the then vaguely known districts lying west and north of that famous pass in the Trosachs, out of which there was not so long before Scott's time but one way of issue—namely, by a rude ladder adown a precipitous slope, a ladder compact of branches and roots of trees. Even more surprising it is to learn that when the future poet and novelist drove in a small gig through Liddesdale, in the southland, his progress attracted much wondering attention, for never before had the peasantry of this lonely district beheld any wheeled vehicle pass along their rough moorland paths and stony braes. Bearing this in mind, it is easier to realise that the famous old Border-reiver, Auld Wat o' Harden, was a not very remote ancestor of Scott—the same who had for wife the famous Mary, the “Flower of Yarrow,” who one day, finding the supply of victuals running

short, placed before her hungry husband and his guests a great dish, on removing the cover of which they saw only a pair of heavy spurs—an admirable hint as to the urgency of the household needs, and the way to supply them. The great-grandson of “Auld Wat” was that Scott of Harden popularly called “Beardie,” from the long beard he wore in memory of the execution of Charles I., and this Beardie it was who was great-grandfather to the poet.

Nor was Scott’s marvellous influence slow in exercising itself. The *Lady of the Lake* was published in May, and in July of the same summer a tide of visitors from Edinburgh and elsewhere set towards the Loch Katrine district, to the mingled bewilderment and delight of the Trosachs Highlanders. From that summer onward this annual tide has never ceased, has gained enormously in volume, and now spreads throughout Scotland from Edinburgh on the east to the Western Isles—from the rippling shallows of the Tweed to the wilds of Ross and Sutherland, and even to the distant Orkneys. Within his lifetime, as we have already seen, the man who has fittingly been styled the Wizard of the North saw justice done to the Celtic race, of which he was so ardent a champion, without being able to claim kinship therewith ; saw ancient jealousies and misunderstandings pass away, and beheld the solidification of Gael and Lowlander in one Scottish people ; witnessed a widespread revival and a still more widespread new

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awakening of interest in the romantic history of his native land, an unprecedented access of national material prosperity, and the establishment on a sure basis of great hopes for the future. All this he witnessed ; and though, in the sincere humility that was so characteristic of his nature, he would have deprecated the assertion, he must have realised that if these great results were not wholly due to his influence, he at any rate had been the main instrument in their evolution.

While, therefore, the civilised world finds in Walter Scott a writer of supreme imaginative power, a poet of Homeric force, simplicity, and picturesqueness, his countrymen recognise in him the man who, in addition to the great legacy of literature which he bequeathed primarily to them, wrought more good to his native land than has done any other of her sons since Wallace fought for and Bruce maintained her independence.

I.

It is not frequent for the lives of poets and imaginative writers to be strongly permeated by that air of romance wherein they so delight to dwell in the spirit. Little differing, essentially, from the lives of ordinary men are those of Chaucer or of Shakespeare, of Milton or of Wordsworth. Now and again we meet with a few about whose days broods this subtle air, as in the case of a Tasso ending a brilliant career in the thralldom of

madness, with Leonora loving him to the last ; as in the case of Goethe, where sheer personal as well as intellectual pre-eminence becomes romantic, because so wholly removed from the common groove ; as in the case of George Sand, with her many-coloured days, her strange friendships, her passionate realisation of life ; as in the case of Byron, with his misfortunes, his striking personality, his vices, his stirring *finale*. In the case of Scott—for that there is romance in his career no one will deny—it is to be found in the record of his achievements, and in his noble struggle with adversity ; the solicitor's clerk rising to be the Laird of Abbotsford (a property literally made by his own energy out of waste land), and receiving acknowledgment as one of the greatest writers of his time, battling strenuously with bitter misfortune, and dying comparatively early, broken down though not subdued.

The biographical details of the great writer in question are so familiar, or are so easily ascertainable, that the merest outline of them may be given here. The clan, to use a word now more generally accepted as applicable to a Highland sept, to which he belonged was that of Buccleuch, his special branch being the line of Harden. As a "Scott of Harden," Walter Scott the elder enjoyed a good social position in Edinburgh, though at that time a solicitorship was held in no great repute ; his wife also, one of the Border Rutherfords, was of a good stock. Walter was the third child of the marriage. At an early age he was sent, chiefly on

account of a slight lameness, the result of a fever, to his uncle's place, called Sandy Knowe, near Kelso, and here it was that he first became acquainted with that fascinating Border history, the study and literary illustration of which brought him throughout life such keen enjoyment. In that remote neighbourhood, and in the old-time simplicity of the Sandy Knowe household, the legends of bygone days were still almost as fresh as though the events narrated had but quite recently occurred ; the eager youngster had an insatiable appetite for everything of the kind, and when at the end of two years he returned to Edinburgh with renewed health, he not only was fairly acquainted with much local folk-lore, but was also a thorough-going "Scott of Harden." While still at the High School he fell in with a literary treasure, Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, a book that thenceforth ranked as one of his prime favourites, and one that indubitably exercised a strong influence on the romantic side of the young student's nature. He would hug these volumes, obtained with no slight difficulty owing to the scarcity of shillings under which he laboured at that time, almost with passion ; he would go about repeating ballad after ballad ; and at last his enthusiasm and recitative powers so worked upon friends, old and young, that he was constantly being asked to give of his mental store. When he entered college he read omnivorously, as nearly all great producers do when young, but he paid such slight

attention to classics that in middle life he could not even repeat the Greek alphabet. The romantic literature of Scotland, England, old France, and, above all, of Germany, fascinated this awkward, heavily-made boy, until, with all his Scotch shrewdness and native candour, he came to live in a mediæval dreamland. Passionately fond of all field sports, especially delighting in riding and all that appertained to the chase or to war, he was thus saved from developing into a mere visionary. Though living in a world of his own charged with romantic sentiments, there was nothing of Werter in Walter Scott. Unlike most youths of genius, he had no premonitions of literary greatness ; as a matter of fact he never manifested any self-directed bias towards the profession for which nature destined him. The ambition of his youth and early manhood was to become a laird in the old Scotch district, to lead the life of a Scottish country gentleman, and to do his utmost to preserve in their integrity those Border ballads which were rapidly being forgotten, or surviving only in corrupt oral tradition. He never foresaw the future great poet and greater novelist, and there can be no doubt in the minds of those who have carefully studied his life and his character that, had he early come into a fortune, the world would have seen nothing of the *Waverley Novels*, probably nothing even of the poems. Scott himself records the natural indolence against which he had to contend, but his abstention from literary work, in the events just re-

ferred to, would not have been due to mental apathy but to simple indifference to literature and its honours—indifference, that is to say, to the literary career. By the time his attendance at the college classes ceased he was far more widely read in general literature than most of his compeers, and was even more developed in his tastes and sympathies than are, as a rule, young men of his age ; but as yet no creative impulse disturbed him. Though apprenticed to a solicitor, a Writer to the Signet, Scott ultimately chose the profession of the bar, and in his twenty-second year became an advocate. There could not have been a better place for the future author than Edinburgh, for here, in addition to many other advantages, he enjoyed congenial society, making many valued friendships that lasted throughout life. By this time he had formed a genuinely passionate affection for a young and beautiful girl, an affection which there is every reason to believe was duly returned. In course of time some insurmountable obstacle prevented the mutual attachment arriving at its proper fulfilment. Scott, with his characteristic reticence which never his inner life was affected, has said little on the subject ; but it was only too manifest to those who knew him best that he suffered acutely, that indeed the wound was one that had pierced too deep ever to be wholly cured. The only record in verse of this romantic attachment is in the verses "The Violet," printed first here among the Miscellaneous Poems (Vol. II.). The bitterness, however, in these

few lines was due more to a mood than to the writer's conviction of having misplaced his affection. "The Violet" was composed in 1797, and it was not long hereafter that he made the acquaintance of a lady who enabled him to forget for the moment all he had suffered, and who charmed him by her bright companionableness. This was a Mdle. Charpentier, the daughter of a Royalist emigrant whom he encountered in Gilsland, that little-known Cumberland locality which later on the great novelist immortalised in *St. Ronan's Well*. After a short engagement the young couple were married. It has sometimes been asserted that this union was not altogether a happy one, but on examination it will be seen that it certainly could not with fairness be termed unfortunate. The future Lady Scott had many pleasant qualities, but there was not much in her nature that could sympathise with that of her husband. Undoubtedly he was often forced to find appreciative understanding elsewhere than in his wife, yet with all this the two lived from first to last in quiet content—lived together, had children, witnessed great changes of fortune, and neither found in the other aught blameworthy. Beneath his air of practical wisdom Scott was enthusiastically romantic; it would have been difficult for him never to have fretted with any constant companion, especially with one to whom he appeared oftenest in his most ordinary attitude.

After his marriage, Scott's happiest seasons were spent at his cottage at Lasswade, near Edinburgh.

Here, after his professional hours were over, he busied himself with his much-loved German studies (in 1799 printing his admirable translation of Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen*), in collecting materials for his projected *Border Minstrelsy*, and in composing original poetic work of a similar nature. After the turn of the century, the chief crisis in the life of Sir Walter Scott occurred. He was about thirty years old, was married, was in a fairly good position, and with satisfactory prospects : but nothing had as yet occurred to make even himself dream of devoting himself to any other profession than that of law. On the publication of the *Border Minstrelsy* the tide of his real life began to flow. He was regarded no longer as a mere amateur, though even yet he seemed to entertain no definite idea as to a literary career. The *Minstrelsy* had been printed by a James Ballantyne, a young man whom Scott knew and of whom he thought highly, and whom about this time he persuaded to establish a business-centre in Edinburgh, offering to join in partnership—an offer that was accepted and acted upon. Ere long, a younger Ballantyne having been taken into partnership also, the firm undertook publishing as well as printing ; and from this time forth there began, all unconsciously at first, that tremendous uphill struggle which finally broke down the great genius of Walter Scott, and induced death before the natural term. But a lengthened period of brilliant prosperity had now fairly set in. The *Minstrelsy* brought material

profit as well as friends and reputation, and, moreover, with what his wife brought as dowry, and with what he made professionally, the young advocate was very comfortably settled. At the instance of a friend—Lady Dalkeith—he began a ballad on a large scale, his choice of metre having been guided by a reminiscence of some stanzas in Coleridge's "Christabel," which a friend had repeated to him, and which had greatly fascinated him by their rhythmical freedom and novel beauty. This intended ballad grew into a metrical romance, and finally the divisions, or cantos, were knit to each other by means of transitional pieces, in themselves consistent. To this effort he finally gave the title, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Ballantyne & Co., of course, issued the volume, and the success was immediate and unmistakable. A new poet had arisen, a delightful story-teller, a veritable romancist, had appeared upon the scene, and "all the world" read *The Lay*. The following year (1806) Scott, who had already gained the sheriff-deputeship of Selkirkshire, obtained a clerkship of Session, which, though held at first in reversion, meant that he needed no longer to have any anxiety as to means.

His Selkirk appointment gave him an excuse for living in his favourite district, and he took up his abode at Ashestiel, a farm-house in Ettrick Forest. By this time he had commenced a prose romance, which, however, he put aside for what he considered more important work, and for many years forgot all about it. In 1814 this romance,

completed at last, was published under a name that is now familiar throughout the civilised world; but of *Waverley* and its successors nothing need be said here, where we are dealing with the author in his poetic capacity. The enormous sale of *The Lay* stimulated the young poet to renewed effort, and in 1808 *Marmion* saw the light, bringing more wealth, literary reputation, and general fame to the author. At this period he got through an immense quantity of work, to which reference in detail, however, need not be made. About a couple of years after the publication of *Marmion*, the poet's admirers were able to delight in *The Lady of the Lake*, now the most widely read of the poems. But already a shadow was overclouding the great reputation of the new writer. Byron was bewitching the popular ear and taste, and his northern rival foresaw that the star of the author of *Childe Harold* was in the ascendant, while his was trembling on the verge of descent. Other poetic productions succeeded, however, though none to equal what had already appeared. *The Vision of Don Roderick* (1811) had but a moderate success; *Rokeby* (1813) had a fair sale, but met with slight critical appreciation; and *The Lord of the Isles* proved unmistakably that not only were the author's powers unable to produce as worthily as hitherto, but that he had to a great extent lost his hold upon the public. But already he had greatly benefited by these works, and, what was better still, so had his native country, *The Lady of*

the Lake especially having brought many hundreds of visitors from "ow're the Border." In 1817 (three years before he was created a baronet) the unsuccessful *Harold the Dauntless* was the last poem with which he strove to please his readers. Before this *Waverley* had seen the light, and the great writer had drifted into a new and even more wonderful eddy in the brilliant stream of his life.

With the proceeds of *Rokeby* the author was enabled to fulfil a long-cherished desire—that of landed-proprietorship. A cottage called Clarty Hole, with much adjacent waste ground—desolate in aspect even in better days—lay close to the Tweed, and in proximity to Melrose, Ashiestiel, and Selkirk. The small property was soon re-named with the title of Abbotsford. It would be needless to describe here in detail how "Clarty Hole" ultimately became a valuable estate; how woods, planted by "Scott of Abbotsford," grew up and relieved the moorland barrenness, and how a baronial residence at last threw towards the shallow waters of the Tweed the long shadows of its Gothic peaks and gables.

Disaster had several times threatened to overwhelm the house of Ballantyne & Co., but the enormous success of the novels had again and again staved off ruin. But Scott's best years were now occupied in a severe struggle with adverse circumstances. His work deteriorated in quality; his serenity of mind, his health of body, yielded to the terrible strain. Finally, the

crushing disaster came, and bankruptcy stared him and his partners in the face. The author of *Waverley* might, without meeting with condemnation, have refused to struggle further, but he was of too honourable a nature to live with any peace of mind without an attempt to retrieve the obligations he now found himself unable to fulfil. By an arrangement with the creditors, he saved the Abbotsford which he had literally himself created, and which he loved with veritable passion. His *Life of Napoleon* and the later novels were the outcome of this undertaking. While labouring within his insufficient lodging at Edinburgh (in strange contrast to what was even then his European fame, and the great honour he was held in), other misfortunes assailed him, chief among which was the death of his faithful wife. These and all subsequent trials he bore nobly, with a dignified resignation that appealed to every one who witnessed it. A visit to London cheered him by demonstrating the esteem in which he was held by all men of eminence in the metropolis. His labours were more severe than ever. Volume succeeded volume : now a new romance ; again some interesting treatise, as, for instance, the *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*. One or two paralytic seizures now warned him that the end could not be very far off. "Such a shaking hands with Death," he said, half jocularly to a friend, "is formidable." Vainly his friends endeavoured to persuade him to leave all pen-work alone : he was one of

those bound to die in harness, even though the feeble amount accomplished should be unsatisfactory. A pathetic incident happened in September of 1831, when Wordsworth came from his lake-home to bid his old friend and comrade farewell. The two walked down the Vale of Yarrow together—a memorable walk for the English poet, who immortalised it in “Yarrow Revisited.”

At last it became necessary to try some complete change. A royal vessel conveyed the sufferer to the Mediterranean, and to the fascinations of Italy. But the time for enjoyment, even for genuine interest, was over, and the great writer only became worse and worse. A yearning for Abbotsford overcame him, a longing accentuated by the news of Goethe's death. He knew he would soon follow his famous friend, and, like him, he wished to die at home. Death indeed nearly vanquished him by the time he reached London, but his great wish was not to be frustrated after all. Hundreds inquired daily how the health of the beloved writer was—hundreds from royalty down to the labourers collected in the street—and some hope was entertained when it was found that he could be taken northward. Most of the journey the dying man lay apparently insensible in the carriage, but as the familiar home-district was approached there was that famous brief revival. “As he descended the vale of Gala he began to gaze about him, and by degrees it was obvious that he was recognising the features of that familiar landscape. Presently he

murmured a name or two—*Gala Water, surely, Buckholm, Torwoodlee*. As we rounded the hill, and the outline of the Eildons burst on him, he became greatly excited ; and when, turning himself on the couch, his eye caught at length his own towers, at the distance of a mile, he sprang up with a cry of delight."

A few days passed, and the sufferer seemed to become a little better. Once he asked for a pen and paper, and then he realised in its full extent his incapacity—"He sank back, silent tears rolling down his cheeks."

It was on the 21st September 1832 that Sir Walter Scott, whose remains now lie in the family grave among the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey, passed out of the fitful fever of his latter years. "It was a beautiful day, so warm that every window was wide open, and so perfectly still that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around the bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes."

Perhaps no higher tribute was ever paid to this great writer and great man than was spoken to him in the height of his prosperity by an aged uncle—"God bless thee, Walter, my man ! Thou hast risen to be great, but thou wast always good."

II.

Walter Scott the poet is indubitably dwarfed by Walter Scott the novelist. His genius found its

highest development in the *Bride of Lammermoor* and in *Old Mortality*, rather than in *Marmion* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. But regarding him in his poetic capacity only, it is beyond dispute that he ranks among the few really great men who have made the special glory of English literature. He has been called the most imaginative mind after that of Shakespeare, but to say that he was the most imaginative poet would be to create a mistaken impression. In the highest qualities of imagination there could, for instance, be no comparison between Scott and Coleridge. Nor is he great with the greatness of Chaucer or Spenser, of Milton or Wordsworth, of Shelley, or Coleridge, or Byron. Chaucer was more of the born singer; Spenser was a far more accomplished master of his craft; Milton reached heights of both 'sound and sense' altogether beyond him; Wordsworth had far deeper insight; Shelley far intenser passion; Coleridge supreamer imagination and supreamer touch; Byron more resistless poetic impulse. But Scott had in his poetic nature something of each of the special characteristics that made these men great, and in addition—he was Scott! He is not a poet for poets, that is speaking technically—he is too little under restraint, does not always realise when he has said enough, not infrequently mistakes rhyming sentences for poetic music; but fortunately it is not the judgment of poets and critics that determines the fate of a writer. If the great non-critical public is touched to tears or laughter, or is

made to vibrate with vivid interest, it cares little though the magician who moves it does not altogether satisfy some of his fellow-wizards and their devotees. Shelley was pooh-pooh'd ; Keats was pooh-pooh'd ; Wordsworth was pooh-pooh'd ; but the public loves and knows by heart "The Skylark," the "Ode to the Nightingale," and the "Intimations of Immortality," and neither knows nor cares anything about the dead and forgotten pooh-poohers. But Walter Scott touched a right chord in his fellow-countrymen, and the response was immediate and unmistakable. He is the poet of action, of spectacular display, of the brilliant aspects of life during a stirring period of national history. He cares little for the significance of a ruined temple, but much for its associations of bygone picturesque pageantries ; little for the deep meanings of many natural things, regarding the latter merely as suitable colours for his palette ; little for the hidden springs of character, but much for the actual manifestations thereof. In a word, with all his great imaginative endowment, with all his natural and acquired romanticism, he is not the seer, the *in-seeing* poet ; rather he views a great whole, and has exceptional genius for representing the vision in vivid outlines, with brilliant illumining touches every here and there—an entrancing picture, coloured by romantic imagination, but often, in some occult fashion, curiously unsatisfactory. The charm of *Marmion*, of *The Lay*, lies in the freshness, the vigourousness, the genuine manliness that characterise

most of Scott's work ; everywhere we come across wind-swept hills and moorlands, wave-washed sea-lochs or shadow-haunted lakes, pines and larches catching the gold of sunrise, sunsets flaming against the grey walls of old castles and ruined peels, the clash of swords, the neighing of horses, the sounds of battle, shouted war-cries, armoured knights and reckless moss-troopers, damsels in distress, gallant rescuers, and all the exhilarating pageantry of the days of mediæval romance and chivalry. But he never indulges in mock-heroics—everything is real to him and to those who read. With Chaucer, Scott is pre-eminently the poet of narrative ; he is not a masterly constructor such as was the maker of the *Canterbury Tales*, but he can *tell* as no other British poet has been able to do. He is in this the modern Homer, as in his delight in movement, romantic episodes, chivalrous adventure. The neigh of a horse, the clank of steel, are at all times to him more truly seductive than harp, guitar, or siren-voice ; though these too he loves as essential parts and portions of the life in intensely vivid contemplation of which he so revels. Certainly Scott, though he had nothing either personally or artistically of the licentiousness of Byron, had nothing of asceticism ; he loved pageantry, laughter, sport, adventure, fair women, good-fellowship, and while he understood, had little personal sympathy with Puritanism. And with what a sense of vitality he does permeate his best passages ! Think of the march from Stirling, the incident of King

James and Roderick Dhu, the death of Marmion ;
Let any one read the account of that fatal field of
Flodden, where the Scottish pennon

“ Sunk and rose :
As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail :
It waver'd 'mid the foes ; ”

and if he does not realise how the term Homeric is
the only one to apply, the delights of the “ Harp
of the North ” are not for him.

“ And sudden, as he spoke,
From the sharp ridges of the hill,
All downward to the banks of Till
Was wreathed in sable smoke.
Volumed and fast, and rolling far,
The cloud enveloped Scotland's war,
As down the hill they broke !
Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
Announced their march ; their tread alone,
At times one warning trumpet blown,
At times a stifled hum,
Told England, from his mountain-throne
King James did rushing come.—
Scarce could they hear or see their foes,
Until at weapon-point they close.—
They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword-sway, and with lance's thrust ;
And such a yell was there,
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And hends in upper air ;
O life and death were in the shout,
Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
And triumph and despair.

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

" Long look'd the anxious squires ; their eye
 Could in the darkness nought descry.
 At length the freshening western blast
 Aside the shroud of battle cast ;
 And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
 Above the brightening cloud appears ;
 And in the smoke the pennons flew,
 As in the storm the white sea-mew.
 Then mark'd they, dashing broad and far,
 The broken billows of the war,
 And plumed crests of chieftains brave,
 Floating like foam upon the wave ;
 But nought distinct they see :
 Wide raged the battle on the plain ;
 Spears shook, and falchions clash'd amain ;
 Fell England's arrow-flight like rain ;
 Crests rose, and stoop'd, and rose again,
 Wild and disorderly.
 Amid the scene of tumult, high
 They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly :
 And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
 And Edmund Howard's lion bright,
 Still bear them bravely in the fight ;
 Although against them come,
 Of gallant Gordons many a one,
 And many a stubborn Highlandman,
 And many a rugged Border clan,
 With Huntly, and with Home."

Of the three leading poetic narratives the
 earliest is in someways the most interesting, for it
 affords peculiar insight into the real nature of
 Scott. *The Lay*, moreover, is the most romantic—
 even the most imaginative. *Marmion* is the
 most powerful, the most stirring, though it is spoilt

by its hero being only a "hero" in a very modified sense of the term. The *Lady of the Lake* is much the most ably constructed. It is a significant fact that Scott's poetic imagination declined from its first exercise: between the "Eve of St. John," and the *Lord of the Isles*, there is a wide distance. The first of these two poems was written before *The Lay*, and is the author's highest imaginative reach; the second, a delightful companion indeed in travelling or residing in the Western Highlands, only too plainly exhibits slackening power and feebler impulse. *Rokeby* also shows that the minstrel had in part lost his cunning, though none the less is it full of fine passages. The "Vision of Don Roderick" was an unsuccessful attempt to describe contemporary events in Spain in an unsuitable "frame:" neither it, nor the indifferent "Harold the Dauntless," nor the weak "Field of Waterloo," are here reprinted. In the miscellaneous ballads and songs, and in the lyrics from the novels, most readers will find sincere pleasure. Most of these are stirring or beautiful, and none here printed is devoid of some measure of excellence.

A word as to the arrangement of the contents and as to certain exclusions. The ballads from the *Minstrelsy* are in this edition of the works of Scott placed at the commencement of the collection, and in so doing, the editor has been actuated quite as much by his desire to accentuate the high place occupied by the first of them—the

"Eve of St. John"—as by the propriety of taking them according to chronological sequence.

Another important change from any previous edition is in the omission of the long introductions to the different cantos of *Marmion*. Every editor, and most critics, have complained of the serious artistic drawback to the unity of the poem which these "addresses" undoubtedly are. But, at the same time, it has been generally acknowledged that they contain too many beauties as well as too much personal interest to be wholly removed. The present editor has accordingly taken these introductions from the body of the poem, and has reprinted them by themselves under the title of "Six Epistles from Ettrick Forest"—experiencing all the more freedom in so doing, from the fact that Sir Walter himself originally intended to issue them separately under the same designation. The gain to *Marmion* is one which hardly any reader can fail to appreciate.

That the "Vision of Don Roderick," the "Field of Waterloo," and "Harold the Dauntless," along with one or two original and translated ballads, and several of the miscellaneous poems, are omitted, not only constitutes no deprivation for any one who reads for pleasure, but is a distinct advantage in the formation of a true judgment upon the writings of a great man, who should always be judged by those which are worthy, and not by those which are unworthy.

WILLIAM SHARP.



Scott's Poetical Works.

ORIGINAL BALLADS.

(Contributions to Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.)

IMITATIONS OF THE ANCIENT BALLAD.

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN.

SMAYLHO'ME, or Smallholm Tower, the scene of the following ballad, is situated on the northern boundary of Roxburghshire, among a cluster of wild rocks, called Sandiknow-Crags, the property of Lord Polwarth. The tower is a high square building, surrounded by an outer wall, now ruinous. The circuit of the outer court, being defended on three sides by a precipice and morass, is accessible only from the west, by a steep and rocky path. The apartments, as is usual in a Border keep, or fortress, are placed one above another, and communicate by a narrow stair; on the roof are two bartizans, or platforms, for defence or pleasure. The inner door of the tower is wood, the outer an iron gate; the distance between them being nine feet, the thickness, namely, of the wall. From the elevated situation of Smaylho'me Tower, it is seen many miles in every direction. Among the crags by which it is surrounded, one, more eminent, is called the *Watchfold*, and is said to have been the station of a

beacon, in the times of war with England. Without the tower-court is a ruined chapel. Brotherstone is a heath, in the neighbourhood of Smaylho'me Tower.

This ballad was first printed in Mr. Lewis's *Tales of Wonder*. Later it was published with some additional illustrations, particularly an account of the battle of Ancram Moor; which seemed proper in a work upon Border antiquities. The catastrophe of the tale is founded upon a well-known Irish tradition. This ancient fortress and its vicinity formed the scene of the Author's infancy, and seemed to claim from him this attempt to celebrate them in a Border tale.

THE Baron of Smaylho'me rose with day,
He spurr'd his courser on,
Without stop or stay down the rocky way,
That leads to Brotherstone.

He went not with the bold Buccleuch,
His banner broad to rear;
He went not 'gainst the English yew,
To lift the Scottish spear.

Yet his plate-jack was braced, and his helmet was
laced,
And his vaunt-brace of proof he wore:
At his saddle-gerthe was a good steel sperthe,
Full ten pound weight and more.

The Baron return'd in three days' space,
And his looks were sad and sour;
And weary was his courser's pace,
As he reach'd his rocky tower.

He came not from where Ancram Moor
Ran red with English blood;
Where the Douglas true, and the bold Buccleuch,
'Gainst keen Lord Evers stood.

Yet was his helmet hack'd and hew'd,
His acon pierced and tore,
His axe and his dagger with blood imbrued—
But it was not English gore.

He lighted at the Chapellage,
He held him close and still;
And he whistled thrice for his little foot-page,
His name was English Will.

"Come thou hither, my little foot-page,
Come hither to my knee;
Though thou art young and tender of age,
I think thou art true to me.

"Come, tell me all that thou hast seen,
And look thou tell me true!
Since I from Smaylho'me Tower have been,
What did thy lady do?"—

"My lady, each night, sought the lonely light,
That burns on the wild Watchfold;
For, from height to height, the beacons bright
Of the English foemen told.

"The bittern clamour'd from the moss,
The wind blew loud and shrill:
Yet the craggy pathway she did cross
To the eiry Beacon Hill.

"I watched her steps, and silent came
Where she sat her on a stone;—
No watchman stood by the dreary flame,
It burn'd all alone.

"The second night I kept her in sight,
Till to the fire she came,
And, by Mary's might ! an Armed Knight
Stood by the lonely flame.

"And many a word that warlike lord
Did speak to my lady there ;
But the rain fell fast, and loud blew the blast,
And I heard not what they were.

"The third night there the sky was fair,
And the mountain-blast was still,
As again I watch'd the secret pair,
On the lonesome Beacon Hill.

"And I heard her name the midnight hour,
And name this holy eve ;
And say, ' Come this night to thy lady's bower ;
Ask no bold Baron's leave.

" ' He lifts his spear with the bold Buccleuch ;
His lady is all alone ;
The door she'll undo, to her knight so true,
On the eve of good St. John.'—

" ' I cannot come ; I must not come :
I dare not come to thee ;
On the eve of St. John I must wander alone ;
In thy bower I may not be.'—

" ' Now, out on thee, faint-hearted knight !
Thou should'st not say me nay ;
For the eve is sweet, and when lovers meet,
Is worth the whole summer's day.

"And I'll chain the blood-hound, and the warder
shall not sound,
And rushes shall be strew'd on the stair ;
So, by the black-rood stone, and by holy St. John,
I conjure thee, my love, to be there !"—

"Though the blood-hound be mute, and the rush
beneath my foot,
And the warder his bugle should not blow,
Yet there sleepeth a priest in a chamber to the east,
And my footstep he would know.'—

"O fear not the priest, who sleepeth to the east !
For to Dryburgh the way he has ta'en ;
And there to say mass, till three days do pass,
For the soul of a knight that is slayne. —

"He turn'd him around, and grimly he frown'd ;
Then he laugh'd right scornfully—
'He who says the mass-rite for the soul of that knight
May as well say mass for me ;

"At the lone midnight hour, when bad spirits
have power,
In thy chamber will I be.'
With that he was gone, and my lady left alone,
And no more did I see."

Then changed, I trow, was that bold Baron's brow,
From the dark to the blood-red high ;

"Now tell me the mien of the knight thou hast seen,
For, by Mary, he shall die !"—

"His arms shone full bright, in the beacon's red light,
His plume it was scarlet and blue ;

On his shield was a hound, in a silver leash bound,
And his crest was a branch of the yew."—

"Thou liest, thou liest, thou little foot-page,
Loud dost thou lie to me !
For that knight is cold, and low laid in the mould,
All under the Eildon-tree."—

"Yet hear but my word, my noble lord !
For I heard her name his name ;
And that lady bright she called the knight
Sir Richard of Coldinghame."—

The bold Baron's brow then changed, I trow,
From high blood-red to pale—
"The grave is deep and dark—and the corpse is
stiff and stark—
So I may not trust thy tale.

"Where fair Tweed flows round holy Melrose,
And Eildon slopes to the plain,
Full three nights ago, by some secret foe,
That gay gallant was slain.

"The varying light deceived thy sight,
And the wild winds drown'd the name ;
For the Dryburgh bells ring, and the white monks
do sing,
For Sir Richard of Coldinghame !"

He pass'd the court-gate, and he oped the tower-gate,
And he mounted the narrow stair, [wait,
To the bartizan-seat, where, with maids that on her
He found his lady fair.

That lady sat in mournful mood ;
Look'd over hill and vale ;
Over Tweed's fair flood, and Mertoun's wood,
And all down Teviotdale.

"Now hail, now hail, thou lady bright !"—
"Now hail thou Baron true !
What news, what news, from Ancram fight ?
What news from the bold Buccleuch ?"—

"The Ancram moor is red with gore,
For many a Southron fell ;
And Buccleuch has charged us, evermore,
To watch our beacons well."—

The lady blush'd red, but nothing she said :
Nor added the Baron a word :
Then she stepp'd down the stair to her chamber fair,
And so did her moody lord.

In sleep the lady mourn'd, and the Baron toss'd
and turn'd,
And oft to himself he said,—
"The worms around him creep, and his bloody
grave is deep . . .
It cannot give up the dead !"—

It was near the ringing of matin-bell,
The night was well-nigh done,
When a heavy sleep on that Baron fell,
On the eve of good St. John.

The lady look'd through the chamber fair,
By the light of a dying flame ;
And she was aware of a knight stood there—
Sir Richard of Coldinghame !

"Alas ! away, away !" she cried,

"For the holy Virgin's sake !"—

"Lady, I know who sleeps by thy side,
But, lady, he will not awake.

"By Eildon-tree, for long nights three,
In bloody grave have I lain ;
The mass and the death-prayer are said for me,
But, lady, they are said in vain.

"By the Baron's brand, near Tweed's fair strand,
Most foully slain, I fell ;
And my restless sprite on the beacon's height,
For a space is doom'd to dwell.

"At our trysting-place, for a certain space,
I must wander to and fro :
But I had not had power to come to thy bower
Hadst thou not conjured me so."—

Love master'd fear—her brow she cross'd ;
"How, Richard, hast thou sped ?
And art thou saved, or art thou lost ?"—
The vision shook his head !

"Who spilleth life, shall forfeit life ;
So bid thy lord believe :
That lawless love is guilt above,
This awful sign receive."

He laid his left palm on an oaken beam ;
His right upon her hand ;
The lady shrunk, and fainting sunk,
For it scorch'd like a fiery brand.

The sable score, of fingers four,
Remains on that board impress'd ;
And for evermore that lady wore
A covering on her wrist.

There is a nun in Dryburgh bower,
Ne'er looks upon the sun ;
There is a monk in Melrose tower
He speaketh word to none.

That nun, who ne'er beholds the day,
That monk who speaks to none—
That nun was Smaylh'me's lady gay,
That monk the bold Baron.

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

In Three Parts.

PART FIRST.—ANCIENT.

(Author's Note.)

FEW personages are so renowned in tradition as Thomas of Ercildoune, known by the appellation of *The Rhymer*. Uniting, or supposing to unite, in his person the powers of poetical composition and of vaticination, his memory, even after the lapse of five hundred years, is regarded with veneration by his countrymen. To give anything like a certain history of this remarkable man would be indeed difficult ; but the curious may derive some satisfaction from the particulars here brought together.

It is agreed on all hands, that the residence, and probably the birthplace, of this ancient bard was Ercildoune, a village situated upon the Leader, two miles above its junction with the Tweed. The ruins of an ancient tower are still pointed out as the Rhymer's castle. The uniform tradition bears, that his surname was Lermont, or Learmont ; and that the appellation of *The*

Rhymer was conferred on him in consequence of his poetical compositions. There remains, nevertheless, some doubt upon the subject.

It cannot be doubted that Thomas of Ercildoune was a remarkable and important person in his own time, since, very shortly after his death, we find him celebrated as a prophet and as a poet. Whether he himself made any pretensions to the first of these characters, or whether it was gratuitously conferred upon him by the credulity of posterity, it seems difficult to decide. If we may believe Mackenzie, Learmont only versified the prophecies delivered by Eliza, an inspired nun of a convent at Haddington. But of this there seems not to be the most distant proof. On the contrary, all ancient authors, who quote the Rhymer's prophecies, uniformly suppose them to have been emitted by himself.

The popular tale bears, that Thomas was carried off, at an early age, to the Fairy Land, where he acquired all the knowledge which made him afterwards so famous. After seven years' residence, he was permitted to return to the earth, to enlighten and astonish his countrymen by his prophetic powers; still, however, remaining bound to return to his royal mistress, when she should intimate her pleasure. Accordingly, while Thomas was making merry with his friends in the Tower of Ercildoune, a person came running in, and told, with marks of fear and astonishment, that a hart and hind had left the neighbouring forest, and were, composedly and slowly, parading the street of the village. The prophet instantly arose, left his habitation, and followed the wonderful animals to the forest, whence he was never seen to return. According to the popular belief, he still "drees his weird" in Fairy Land, and is one day expected to revisit earth. In the meanwhile, his memory is held in the most profound respect. The Eildon tree, from beneath the shade of which he delivered his prophecies, now no longer exists; but the spot is marked by a large stone, called Eildon Tree Stone. A neighbouring rivulet takes the name of the Bogle Burn (Goblin Brook) from the Rhymer's supernatural visitants.

To the old tale the Editor has ventured to add a Second Part, consisting of a kind of canto, from the printed prophecies vulgarly ascribed to the Rhymer; and a Third Part, entirely modern, founded upon the tradition of his having returned with the hart and hind to the Land of Faëry. To make his peace with the more severe antiquaries, the Editor has prefixed to the Second Part some remarks on Learmont's prophecies.

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

41

TRUE THOMAS lay on Huntlie bank ;
A ferlie he spied wi' his e'e ;
And there he saw a ladye bright,
Come riding down by Eildon Tree.

Her skirt was o' the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o' the velvet syne ;
At ilka tett of her horse's mane,
Hung fifty siller bells and nine.

True Thomas, he pull'd aff his cap,
And louted low down to his knee,
"All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven !
For thy peer on earth I never did see."

"O no, O no, Thomas," she said,
"That name does not belang to me ;
I am but the Queen of fair Elfand,
That am hither come to visit thee.

"Harp and carp, Thomas," she said ;
"Harp and carp along wi' me ;
And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
Sure of your bodie I will be."

"Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird shall never dauntoun me."
Syne he has kiss'd her rosy lips,
All underneath the Eildon Tree.

"Now, ye maun go wi' me," she said ;
"True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me :
And ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro' weal or woe as may chance to be."

She mounted on her milk-white steed !
She's ta'en true Thomas up behind :
And aye, whene'er her bridle rung,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and farther on ;
The steed gaed swifter than the wind ;
Until they reach'd a desert wide,
And living land was left behind.

" Light down, light down, now, true Thomas,
And lean your head upon my knee ;
Abide and rest a little space,
And I will show you ferlies three.

" O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briers ?
That is the path of righteousness,
Though after it but few inquire.

" And see ye not that braid, braid road,
That lies across that lily leven ?
That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the road to heaven.

" And see ye not that bonny road,
That winds about the fernie brae !
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

" But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever ye may hear or see ;
For, if ye speak word in Elflyn land,
Ye'll ne'er get back to your ain countrie."

O they rade on, and farther on,
And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk mirk night, and there was nae stern
light,
And they waded through red blude to the kneec,
For a' the blude that's shed on earth
Rins through the springs o' that countrie.

Syne they came on to a garden green,
And she pu'd an apple frae a tree—
"Take this for thy wages, true Thomas;
It will give thee the tongue that can never lie!"

"My tongue is mine ain," true Thomas said;
"A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!
I neither dought to buy nor sell,
At fair or tryst where I may be.

"I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
Nor ask of grace from fair ladye."—
"Now hold thy peace!" the lady said,
"For as I say, so must it be."—

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green;
And till seven years were gane and past,
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

PART SECOND.—ALTERED FROM ANCIENT PROPHECIES.

THE prophecies, ascribed to Thomas of Ercildoune, have been the principal means of securing to him remembrance "amongst the sons of his people." The author of *Sir Tristram* would long ago have joined, in the vale of oblivion, "Clerk of Tranent, who wrote the adventure of *Schir Gawain*," if, by good hap, the same current of ideas respecting antiquity, which causes Virgil to be regarded as a magician by the Lazaroni of Naples, had not exalted the bard of Ercildoune to the prophetic character. Perhaps, indeed, he himself affected it during his life. We know, at least, for certain, that a belief in his supernatural knowledge was current soon after his death. His prophecies are alluded to by Barbour, by Winton, and by Henry the Minstrel, or *Blind Harry*, as he is usually termed. None of these authors, however, give the words of any of the Rhymer's vaticinations, but merely narrate, historically, his having predicted the events of which they speak. The earliest of the prophecies ascribed to him, which is now extant, is quoted by Mr. Pinkerton from a MS. It is supposed to be a response from Thomas of Ercildoune to a question from the heroic Countess of March, renowned for the defence of the Castle of Dunbar against the English, and termed, in the familiar dialect of her time, *Black Agnes* of Dunbar. This prophecy is remarkable, in so far as it bears very little resemblance to any verses published in the printed copy of the Rhymer's supposed prophecies.

WHEN seven years were come and gane,
The sun blink'd fair on pool and stream ;
And Thomas la-- on Huntlie Bank,
Like one awaken'd from a dream.

He heard the trampling of a steed,
He saw the flash of armour flee,
And he beheld a gallant knight
Come riding down by the Eildon-tree.

He was a stalwart knight, and strong :
Of giant make he 'peared to be :
He stirr'd his horse, as he were wode,
Wi' gilded spurs, of faushion free.

Says—"Well met, well met, true Thomas!
Some uncouth ferlies show to me."—

Says—"Christ thee save, Corspatrick brave!
Thrice welcome, good Dunbar, to me!

"Light down, light down, Corspatrick brave!
And I will show thee curses three,
Shall gar fair Scotland greet and grane,
And change the green to the black livery.

"A storm shall roar this very hour,
From Ross's hills to Solway sea."—

"Ye lied, ye lied, ye warlock hoar,
For the sun shines sweet on fauld and lea."—

He put his hand on the Earlie's head;
He show'd him a rock beside the sea,
Where a king lay stiff beneath his steed,
And steel-dight nobles wiped their e'e.

"The neist curse lights on Branxton hills:
By Flodden's high and heathery side,
Shall wave a banner red as blude,
And chieftains throng wi' meikle pride.

"A Scottish King shall come full keen,
The ruddy lion beareth he;
A feather'd arrow sharp, I ween,
Shall make him wink and warre to sea.

"When he is bloody, and all to bledde,
Thus to his men he still shall say—

'For God's sake, turn ye back again,
And give yon southern folk a fray!
Why should I lose, the right is mine:
My doom is not to die this day.'

" Yet turn ye to the eastern hand,
And woe and wonder ye sall see ;
How forty thousand spearmen stand,
Where yon rank river meets the sea.

" There shall the lion lose the gylte,
And the libbards bear it clean away ;
At Pinkyn Cleuch there shall be spilt
Much gentil bluid that day."—

" Enough, enough, of curse and ban ;
Some blessings show thou now to me,
Or, by the faith o' my bodie," Corspatrick said,
" Ye shall rue the day ye e'er saw me !"—

" The first of blessings I shall thee show
Is by a burn, that's call'd of bread ;
Where Saxon men shall tine the bow,
And find their arrows lack the head.

" Beside that brigg, out ower that burn,
Where the water bickereth bright and sheen.
Shall many a fallen courser spurn,
And knights shall die in battle keen.

" Beside a headless cross of stone,
The libbards there shall lose the gree :
The raven shall come, the erne shall go,
And drink the Saxon bluid sae free.
The cross of stone they shall not know,
So thick the corses there shall be."—

" But tell me now," said brave Dunbar,
" True Thomas, tell now unto me,
What man shall rule the isle Britain,
Even from the north to the southern sea ?"—

" A French Queen shall bear the son,
Shall rule all Britain to the sea ;
He of the Bruce's blood shall come,
As near as in the ninth degree.

" The waters worship shall his race ;
Likewise the waves of the farthest sea ;
For they shall ride over ocean wide,
With hempen bridles, and horse of tree."

PART THIRD.—MODERN.

THOMAS THE RHYMER was renowned among his contemporaries as the author of the celebrated romance of *Sir Tristrem*. Of this once-admired poem only one copy is now known to exist, which is in the Advocates' Library. It is sufficient here to mention, that so great was the reputation of the romance of *Sir Tristrem*, that few were thought capable of reciting it after the manner of the author.

The following attempt to commemorate the Rhymer's poetical fame, and the traditional account of his marvellous return to Fairy Land, being entirely modern, would have been placed with greater propriety among the class of Modern Ballads, had it not been for its immediate connection with the first and second parts of the same story.

WHEN seven years more were come and gone,
Was war through Scotland spread,
And Ruberslaw show'd high Dunyon
His beacon blazing red.

Then all by bonny Coldingknow
Pitch'd palliouns took their room,
And crested helms, and spears a-rowe,
Glanced gaily through the broom.

The Leader, rolling to the Tweed,
Resounds the ensensie ;
They roused the deer from Caddenhead,
To distant Torwoodlee.

The feast was spread in Ercildoune,
In Learmont's high and ancient hall :
And there were knights of great renown,
And ladies, laced in pall.

Nor lack'd they, while they sat at dine,
The music nor the tale,
Nor goblets of the blood-red wine,
Nor mantling quaighs of ale.

True Thomas rose, with harp in hand,
When as the feast was done :
(In minstrel strife, in Fairy Land,
The elfin harp he won.)

Hush'd were the throng, both limb and tongue,
And harpers for envy pale ;
And armed lords lean'd on their swords,
And hearken'd to the tale.

In numbers high, the witching tale
The prophet pour'd along ;
No after bard might e'er avail
Those numbers to prolong.

Yet fragments of the lofty strain
Float down the tide of years,
As, buoyant on the stormy main,
A parted wreck appears.

He sung King Arthur's Table Round :
The Warrior of the Lake ;
How courteous Gawaine met the wound,
And bled for ladies' sake.

But chief, in gentle Tristrem's praise,
The notes melodious swell ;
Was none excell'd in Arthur's days,
The knight of Lionelle.

For Marke, his cowardly uncle's right,
A venom'd wound he bore ;
When fierce Morholde he slew in fight,
Upon the Irish shore.

No art the poison might withstand ;
No medicine could be found,
Till lovely Isolde's lily hand
Had probed the rankling wound.

With gentle hand and soothing tongue
She bore the leech's part ;
And, while she o'er his sick-bed hung,
He paid her with his heart.

O fatal was the gift, I ween !
For, doom'd in evil tide,
The maid must be rude Cornwall's queen,
His cowardly uncle's bride.

Their loves, their woes, the gifted bard
In fairy tissue wove ;
Where lords, and knights, and ladies bright,
In gay confusion strove,
D-D

The Garde Joyeuse, amid the tale,
High rear'd its glittering head ;
And Avalon's enchanted vale
In all its wonders spread.

Brangwain was there, and Segramore,
And fiend-born Merlin's gramarye ;
Of that famed wizard's mighty lore,
O who could sing but he ?

Through many a maze the winning song
In changeful passion led,
Till bent at length the listening throng
O'er Tristrem's dying bed.

His ancient wounds their scars expand,
With agony his heart is wrung :
O where is Isolde's lily hand,
And where her soothing tongue ?

She comes ! she comes !—like flash of flame
Can lovers' footsteps fly :
She comes ! she comes !—she only came
To see her Tristrem die.

She saw him die ; her latest sigh
Join'd in a kiss his parting breath,
The gentlest pair that Britain bare,
United are in death.

There paused the harp : its lingering sound
Died slowly on the ear ;
The silent guests still bent around,
For still they seem'd to hear.

Then woe broke forth in murmurs weak :
Nor ladies heaved alone the sigh ;
But half ashamed, the rugged cheek
Did many a gauntlet dry.

On Leader's stream and Learmont's tower,
The mists of evening close ;
In camp, in castle, or in bower,
Each warrior sought repose.

Lord Douglas, in his lofty tent,
Dream'd o'er the woeful tale ;
When footsteps light, across the bent,
The warrior's ears assail.

He starts, he wakes :—" What, Richard, ho !
Arise, my page, arise !
What venturous wight, at dead of night,
Dare step where Douglas lies ? "

Then forth they rush'd : by Leader's tide
A selcouth sight they see—
A hart and hind pace side by side,
As white as snow on Fairnalie.

Beneath the moon, with gesture proud,
They stately move and slow ;
Nor scare they at the gathering crowd,
Who marvel as they go.

To Learmont's tower a message sped,
As fast as page might run ;
And Thomas started from his bed,
And soon his clothes did on.

First he woxe pale, and then woxe red ;
Never a word he spake but three :—
“ My sand is run ; my thread is spun ;
This sign regardeth me.”

The elfin harp his neck around,
In minstrel guise, he hung ;
And on the wind, in doleful sound,
Its dying accents rung.

Then forth he went : yet turn'd him oft
To view his ancient hall :
On the grey tower, in lustre soft,
The autumn moonbeams fall ;

And Leader's waves, like silver sheen,
Danced shimmering in the ray ;
In deepening mass, at distance seen,
Broad Soltra's mountains lay.

“ Farewell, my fathers' ancient tower !
A long farewell,” said he :
“ The scene of pleasure, pomp, or power,
Thou never more shalt be.

“ To Learmont's name no foot of earth
Shall here again belong,
And, on thy hospitable hearth,
The hare shall leave her young.

“ Adieu ! adieu !” again he cried,
All as he turn'd him roun'—
“ Farewell to Leader's silver tide !
Farewell to Ercildoune !”

The hart and hind approach'd the place,
As lingering yet he stood :
And there, before Lord Douglas' face,
With them he cross'd the flood.

Lord Douglas leap'd on his berry-brown steed,
And spurr'd him the Leader o'er ;
But, though he rode with lightning speed,
He never saw them more.

Some said to hill, and some to glen,
Their wondrous course had been ;
But ne'er in haunts of living men
Again was Thomas seen.

GLENFINLAS ; OR, LORD RONALD'S CORONACH.

THE simple tradition, upon which the following stanzas are founded, runs thus :—While two Highland hunters were passing the night in a solitary *bothy* (a hut, built for the purpose of hunting), and making merry over their venison and whisky, one of them expressed a wish that they had pretty lasses to complete their party. The words were scarcely uttered, when two beautiful young women, habited in green, entered the hut, dancing and singing. One of the hunters was seduced, by the siren who attached herself particularly to him, to leave the hut : the other remained, and, suspicious of the fair seducers, continued to play upon a trump, or Jew's harp, some strain consecrated to the Virgin Mary. Day at length came, and the temptress vanished. Searching in the forest, he found the bones of his unfortunate friend, who had been torn to pieces and devoured by the fiend into whose toils he had fallen. The place was from thence called the Glen of the Green Women.

Glenfinlas is a tract of forest-ground, lying in the Highlands of Perthshire, not far from Callander in Menteith. It was formerly a royal forest, and now belongs to the Earl of Moray. This country, as well as the adjacent district of Balquidder, was, in times of yore, chiefly inhabited by the Macgregors. To the west of the forest of Glenfinlas lies Loch Katrine, and its romantic avenue, called the Trosachs. Benledi, Benmore, and Benvoirlich, are mountains in the same district, and at no great distance from Glenfinlas. The river Teith passes Callander and the Castle of Doune, and joins the Forth near Stirling. The Pass of Lenny is immediately above Callander, and is the principal access to the Highlands, from that town. Glenartney is a forest, near Benvoirlich. The whole forms a sublime tract of alpine scenery.

This ballad first appeared in the *Tales of Wonder*, by Lewis.

" O HONE a rie' ! O hone a rie' !
 The pride of Albin's line is o'er,
 And fallen Glenartney's stateliest tree ;
 We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more ! "—

O, sprung from great Macgillianore,
 The chief that never fear'd a foe,
 How matchless was thy broad claymore,
 How deadly thine unerring bow !

Well can the Saxon widows tell,
 How, on the Teith's resounding shore,
 The boldest Lowland warriors fell,
 As down from Lenny's pass you bore.

But o'er his hills, in festal day,
 How blazed Lord Ronald's beltane-tree,
 While youths and maids the light strathspey
 So nimbly danced with Highland glee !

Cheer'd by the strength of Ronald's shell,
 E'en age forgot his tresses hoar ;

GLENFINLAS.

55

But now the loud lament we swell,
O ne'er to see Lord Ronald more !

From distant isles a chieftain came,
The joys of Ronald's halls to find,
And chase with him the dark-brown game,
That bounds o'er Albin's hills of wind.

'Twas Moy ; whom in Columba's isle
The Seer's prophetic spirit found,
As, with a minstrel's fire the while,
He waked his harp's harmonious sound.

Full many a spell to him was known,
Which wandering spirits shrink to hear ;
And many a lay of potent tone,
Was never meant for mortal ear.

For there, 'tis said, in mystic mood,
High converse with the dead they hold,
And oft espy the fated shroud,
That shall the future corpse enfold.

O so it fell, that on a day,
To rouse the red deer from their den,
The Chiefs have ta'en their distant way,
And scour'd the deep Glenfinlas glen.

No vassals wait their sports to aid,
To watch their safety, deck their board ;
Their simple dress, the Highland plaid,
Their trusty guard, the Highland sword.

Three summer days, thro' brake and dell,
Their whistling shafts successful flew ;
And still, when dewy evening fell,
The quarry to their hut they drew.

GLENFINLAS.

In grey Glenfinlas' deepest nook
The solitary cabin stood,
Fast by Moneira's sullen brook,
Which murmurs through that lonely wood.

Soft fell the night, the sky was calm,
When three successive days had flown ;
And summer mist in dewy balm
Steep'd heathy bank and mossy stone.

The moon, half-hid in silvery flakes,
Afar her dubious radiance shed,
Quivering on Katrine's distant lakes,
And resting on Benledi's head.

Now in their hut, in social guise,
Their sylvan fare the Chiefs enjoy ;
And pleasure laughs in Ronald's eyes,
As many a pledge he quaffs to Moy.

"What lack we here to crown our bliss,
While thus the pulse of joy beats high ?
What, but fair woman's yielding kiss,
Her panting breath and melting eye ?

"To chase the deer of yonder shades,
This morning left their father's pile
The fairest of our mountain maids,
The daughters of the proud Glengyle.

"Long have I sought sweet Mary's heart,
And dropp'd the tear, and heaved the sigh :
But vain the lover's wily art,
Beneath a sister's watchful eye.

" But thou mayst teach that guardian fair,
While far with Mary I am flown,
Of other hearts to cease her care,
And find it hard to guard her own.

" Touch but thy harp, thou soon shalt see
The lovely Flora of Glengyle,
Unmindful of her charge and me,
Hang on thy notes, 'twixt tear and smile.

" Or, if she choose a melting tale,
All underneath the greenwood bough,
Will good St. Oran's rule prevail,
Stern huntsman of the rigid brow !"—

" Since Enrick's fight, since Morna's death,
No more on me shall rapture rise,
Responsive to the panting breath,
Or yielding kiss, or melting eyes.

" E'en then, when o'er the heath of woe,
Where sunk my hopes of love and fame,
I bade my harp's wild wailings flow,
On me the Seer's sad spirit came.

" The last dread curse of angry heaven,
With ghastly sights and sounds of woe,
To dash each glimpse of joy was given—
The gift, the future ill to know.

" The bark thou saw'st, yon summer morn,
So gaily part from Oban's bay,
My eye beheld her dash'd and torn,
Far on the rocky Colonsay.

"Thy Fergus too—thy sister's son,
Thou saw'st, with pride, the gallant's power,
As marching 'gainst the Lord of Downe,
He left the skirts of huge Benmore.

"Thou only saw'st their tartans wave,
As down Benvoirlich's side they wound,
Heard'st but the pibroch, answering brave
To many a target clanking round.

"I heard the groans, I mark'd the tears,
I saw the wound his bosom bore,
When on the serried Saxon spears
He pour'd his clan's resistless roar.

"And thou, who bidst me think of bliss,
And bidst my heart awake to glee,
And court, like thee, the wanton kiss—
That heart, O Ronald, bleeds for thee!

"I see the death-damps chill thy brow;
I hear thy Warning Spirit cry;
The corpse-lights dance—they're gone, and now . . .
No more is given to gifted eye!"——

"Alone enjoy thy dreary dreams,
Sad prophet of the evil hour!
Say, should we scorn joy's transient beams,
Because to-morrow's storm may lour?

"Or false, or sooth, thy words of woe,
Clangillian's Chieftain ne'er shall fear;
His blood shall bound at capture's glow,
Though doom'd to stain the Saxon spear.

"E'en now, to meet me in yon dell
My Mary's buskins brush the dew."
He spoke, nor bade the Chief farewell,
But call'd his dogs, and gay withdrew.

Within an hour return'd each hound ;
In rush'd the rousers of the deer ;
They howl'd in melancholy sound,
Then closely couch'd beside the Seer.

No Ronald yet, though midnight came ;
And sad were Moy's prophetic dreams,
As, bending o'er the dying flame,
He fed the watch-fire's quivering gleams.

Sudden the hounds erect their ears,
And sudden cease their moaning howl ;
Close press'd to Moy, they mark their fears
By shivering limbs and stifled growl.

Untouch'd, the harp began to ring,
As softly, slowly, oped the door ;
And shook responsive every string,
As light a footstep press'd the floor.

And by the watch-fire's glimmering light,
Close by the minstrel's side was seen
An huntress maid, in beauty bright,
All dropping wet her robes of greer.

All dropping wet her garments seem ;
Chill'd was her cheek, her bosom bare.
As, bending o'er the dying gleam,
She wrung the moisture from her hair.

GLENFINLAS.

With maiden blush, she softly said,
"O gentle huntsman, hast thou seen,
In deep Glenfinlas' moonlight glade,
A lovely maid in vest of green :

"With her a Chief in Highland pride ;
His shoulders bear the hunter's bow,
The mountain dirk adorns his side,
Far on the wind his tartans flow !"—

"And who art thou ? and who are they ?"
All ghastly gazing, Moy replied :
"And why, beneath the moon's pale ray,
Dare ye thus roam Glenfinlas side ?"

"Where wild Loch Katrine pours her tide,
Blue, dark, and deep, round many an isle,
Our father's towers o'erhang her side,
The castle of the bold Glengyle.

"To chase the dun Glenfinlas deer,
Our woodland course this morn'g we bore,
And haply met, while wandering here,
The son of great Macgillianore.

"O aid me, then, to seek the pair,
Whom, loitering in the woods, I lost ;
Alone, I dare not venture there,
Where walks, they say, the shrieking ghost."—

"Yes, many a shrieking ghost walks there ;
Then, first, my own sad vow to keep,
Here will I pour my midnight prayer,
Which still must rise when mortals sleep."

" O first, for pity's gentle sake,
Guide a lone wanderer on her way !
For I must cross the haunted brake,
And reach my father's towers ere day."

" First, three times tell each Ave-bead,
And thrice a Pater-noster say ;
Then kiss with me the holy rede ;
So shall we safely wend our way."

" O shame to knighthood, strange and foul !
Go, doff the bonnet from thy brow,
And shroud thee in the monkish cowl,
Which best befits thy sullen vow."

" Not so, by high Dunlathmon's fire,
Thy heart was froze to love and joy,
When gaily rung thy raptured lyre
To wanton Morna's melting eye."

Wild stared the minstrel's eyes of flame,
And high his sable locks arose,
And quick his colour went and came,
As fear and rage alternate rose.

" And thou ! when by the blazing oak
I lay, to her and love resign'd,
Say, rode ye on the eddying smoke,
Or sail'd ye on the midnight wind ?

" Not thine a race of mortal blood,
Nor old Glengyle's preter'ded line ;
Thy dame, the Lady of the Flood—
Thy sire, the monarch of the Mine."

GLENFINLAS.

He met'ter'd thrice St. Oran's rhyme,
And thrice St. Fillan's powerful prayer ;
Then turn'd him to the eastern clime,
And sternly shook his coal-black hair.

And, bending o'er his harp, he flung
His wild witch-notes on the wind ;
And loud and high, and strange, they rung,
As nigh a magic change they find.

Till wax'd the Spirit's altering form,
Till to the roof her stature grew :
Then, mingling with the rising storm,
With one wild yell away she flew.

Rain beats, hail rattles, whirlwinds tear :
The slender hut in fragments flew ;
But not a lock of Moy's loose hair
Was waved by wind, or wet by dew.

Wild mingling with the howling gale,
Loud bursts of ghastly laughter rise ;
High o'er the minstrel's head they sail,
And die amid the northern skies.

The voice of thunder shook the wood,
As ceased the more than mortal yell ;
And, spattering foul, a shower of blood
Upon the hissing firebrands fell.

Next dropp'd from high a mangled arm ;
The fingers strain'd a half-drawn blade :
And last, the life-blood streaming warm,
Torn from the trunk, a gasping head.

CADYOW CASTLE.

63

Oft o'er that head, in battling field,
Stream'd the proud crest of high Benmore ;
That arm the broad claymore could wield,
Which dyed the Teith with Saxon gore

Woe to Moneira's sullen rills !
Woe to Glenfinlas' dreary glen !
There never son of Albin's hills
Shall draw the hunter's shaft agen.

E'en the tired pilgrim's burning feet
At noon shall shun that sheltering den,
Lest, journeying in their rage, he meet
The wayward Ladies of the Glen.

And we—behind the chieftain's shield
No more shall we in safety dwell ;
None leads the people to the field—
And we the loud lament must swell:

O hone a rie ! O hone a rie !
The pride of Albin's line is o'er !
And fall'n Glenartney's stateliest tree
We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more !

CADYOW CASTLE.

THE ruins of Cadyow or Cadzow Castle, the ancient baronial residence of the family of Hamilton, are situated upon the precipitous banks of the river Ewan, about two miles above its junction with the Clyde.

In detailing the death of the Regent Murray, which is made the subject of the following ballad, Sir Walter Scott uses the

words of Dr. Robertson, "whose account of that memorable event forms a beautiful piece of historical painting."

"Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh was the person who committed this barbarous action. He had been condemned to death soon after the battle of Langside, as we have already related, and owed his life to the Regent's clemency. But part of his estate had been bestowed upon one of the Regent's favourites, who seized his house, and turned out his wife, naked, in a cold night, into the open fields, where, before next morning, she became furiously mad. This injury made a deeper impression on him than the benefit he had received, and from that moment he vowed to be revenged of the Regent. Party rage strengthened and inflamed his private resentment. His kinsmen, the Hamiltons, applauded the enterprise. The maxims of that age justified the most desperate course he could take to obtain vengeance. He followed the Regent for some time, and watched for an opportunity to strike the blow. He resolved at last to wait till his enemy should arrive at Linlithgow, through which he was to pass in his way from Stirling to Edinburgh. He took his stand in a wooden gallery, which had a window towards the street; spread a feather-bed on the floor, to hinder the noise of his feet from being heard; hung up a black cloth behind him, that his shadow might not be observed from without; and, after all this preparation, calmly expected the Regent's approach, who had lodged, during the night, in a house not far distant. Some indistinct information of the danger which threatened him had been conveyed to the Regent, and he paid so much regard to it, that he resolved to return by the same gate through which he had entered, and to fetch a compass round the town. But, as the crowd about the gate was great, and he himself unacquainted with fear, he proceeded directly along the street; and the throng of people obliging him to move very slowly, gave the assassin time to take so true an aim, that he shot him, with a single bullet, through the lower part of his belly, and killed the horse of a gentleman who rode on his other side. His followers instantly endeavoured to break into the house whence the blow had come; but they found the door strongly barricaded, and, before it could be forced open, Hamilton had mounted a fleet horse, which stood ready for him at a back passage, and was got far beyond their reach. The Regent died the same night of his wound."—*History of Scotland*, book v.

Bothwellhaugh rode straight to Hamilton, where he was

received in triumph ; for the ashes of the houses in Clydesdale, which had been burned by Murray's army, were yet smoking ; and party prejudice, the habits of the age, and the enormity of the provocation, seemed to his kinsmen to justify the deed. After a short abode at Hamilton, this fierce and determined man left Scotland, and served in France, under the patronage of the family of Guise, to whom he was doubtless recommended by having avenged the cause of their niece, Queen Mary, upon her ungrateful brother. De Thou has recorded that an attempt was made to engage him to assassinate Gaspar de Coligni, the famous Admiral of France, and the buckler of the Huguenot cause. But the character of Bothwellhaugh was mistaken. He was no mercenary trader in blood, and rejected the offer with contempt and indignation. He had no authority, he said, from Scotland to commit murders in France ; he had avenged his own just quarrel, but he would neither for price nor prayer avenge that of another man.—*Thuanus*, cap. 46.

Addressed to the Right Honourable Lady Anne Hamilton.

WHEN princely Hamilton's abode
Ennobled Cadyow's Gothic towers,
The song went round, the goblet flow'd,
And revel sped the laughing hours.

Then, thrilling to the harp's gay sound,
So sweetly rung each vaulted wall,
And echoed light the dancer's bound,
As mirth and music cheer'd the hall.

But Cadyow's towers, in ruins laid,
And vaults, by ivy mantled o'er ;
Thrill to the music of the shade,
Or echo Evan's hoarser roar.

Yet still, of Cadyow's faded fame,
You bid me tell a minstrel tale,
And tune my harp, of Border frame,
On the wild banks of Evandale.

E-E

For thou, from scenes of courtly pride,
From pleasure's lighter scenes, canst turn,
To draw oblivion's pall aside,
And mark the long-forgotten urn.

Then, noble maid ! at thy command,
Again the crumbled halls shall rise ;
Lo ! as on Evan's banks we stand,
The past returns—the present flies.

Where, with the rock's wood-cover'd side,
Were blended late the ruins green,
Rise turrets in fantastic pride,
And feudal banners flaunt between :

Where the rude torrent's brawling course
Was shagg'd with thorn and tangling sloe,
The ashler buttress braves its force,
And ramparts frown in battled row.

'Tis night—the shade of keep and spire
Obscurely dance on Evan's stream ;
And on the wave the warder's fire
Is chequering the moonlight beam.

Fades slow their light ; the east is grey ;
The weary warder leaves his tower ;
Steeds snort, uncoupled stag-hounds bay,
And merry hunters quit the bower.

The drawbridge falls—they hurry out—
Clatters each plank and swinging chain,
As, dashing o'er, the jovial rout
Urge the shy steed, and slack the rein.

CADYOW CASTLE.

67

First of his troop, the Chief rode on ;
His shouting merry-men throng behind ;
The steed of princely Hamilton
Was fleetier than the mountain wind.

From the thick copse the roebucks bound,
The startled red-deer scuds the plain,
For the hoarse bugle's warrior sound
Has roused their mountain haunts again.

Through the huge oaks of Evandale,
Whose limbs a thousand years have worn,
What sullen roar comes down the gale,
And drowns the hunter's pealing horn ?

Mightiest of all the beasts of chase,
That roam in woody Caledon,
Crashing the forest in his race,
The Mountain Bull comes thundering on.

Fierce, on the hunter's quiver'd band,
He rolls his eyes of swarthy glow,
Spurns, with black hoof and horn, the sand,
And tosses high his mane of snow.

Aim'd well, the Chieftain's lance has flown ;
Struggling in blood the savage lies ;
His roar is sunk in hollow groan—
Sound, merry huntsmen ! sound the *pryse* !

'Tis noon—against the knotted oak
The hunters rest the idle spear ;
Curls through the trees the slender smoke,
Where yeomen light the woodland cheer.

Proudly the Chieftain mark'd his clan,
On greenwood lap all careless thrown,
Yet miss'd his eye the boldest man
That bore the name of Hamilton.

"Why fills not Bothwellhaugh his place,
Still wont our weal and woe to share?
Why comes he not our sport to grace?
Why shares he not our hunter's fare?"—

Stern Claud replied, with darkening face
(Grey Paisley's haughty lord was he),
"At merry feast, or buxom chase,
No more the warrior wilt thou see.

"Few suns have set since Woodhouselee
Saw Bothwellhaugh's bright goblets foam,
When to his hearths, in social glee,
The war-worn soldier turn'd him home.

"There, wan from her maternal throes,
His Margaret, beautiful and mild,
Sate in her bower, a pallid rose,
And peaceful nursed her new-born child.

"O change accursed! past are those days;
False Murray's ruthless spoilers came,
And for the hearth's domestic blaze,
Ascends destruction's volumed flame.

"What sheeted phantom wanders wild,
Where mountain Eske through woodland flows,
Her arms enfold a shadowy child—
Oh! is it she, the pallid rose?

"The wilder'd traveller sees her glide,
And hears her feeble voice with awe—
'Revenge' she cries, 'on Murray's pride!
And woe for injured Bothwellhaugh!'"

He ceased—and cries of rage and grief
Burst mingling from the kindred band,
And half arose the kindling Chief,
And half unsheathed his Arran brand.

But who, o'er bush, o'er stream, and rock,
Rides headlong, with resistless speed,
Whose bloody poniard's frantic stroke
Drives to the leap his jaded steed;

Whose cheek is pale, whose eyeballs glare,
As one some vision'd sight that saw,
Whose hands are bloody, loose his hair?
'Tis he! 'tis he! 'tis Bothwellhaugh.

From gory selle, and reeling steed,
Sprung the fierce horseman with a bound,
And, reeking from the recent deed,
He dash'd his carbine on the ground.

Sternly he spoke—" 'Tis sweet to hear
In good greenwood the bugle blown,
But sweeter to Revenge's ear,
To drink a tyrant's dying groan.

"Your slaughter'd quarry proudly trode,
At dawning morn, o'er dale and down,
But prouder base-born Murray rode
Through old Linlithgow's crowded town.

" From the wild Border's humbled side,
In haughty triumph marchèd he,
While Knox relax'd his bigot pride,
And smiled, the traitorous pomp to see.

" But can stern Power, with all his vaunt
Or Pomp, with all her courtly glare,
The settled heart of Vengeance daunt,
Or change the purpose of Despair !

" With hackbut bent, my secret stand,
Dark as the purposed deed, I chose,
And mark'd, where, mingling in his band,
Troop'd Scottish spikes and English bows.

" Dark Morton, girt with many a spear,
Murder's foul minion, led the van ;
And clash'd their broadswords in the rear
The wild Macfarlane's plaided clan.

" Glencairn and stout Parkhead were nigh,
Obsequious at their Regent's rein,
And haggard Lindesay's iron eye,
That saw fair Mary weep in vain.

" 'Mid pennon'd spears, a steely grove,
Proud Murray's plumage floated high ;
Scarce could his trampling charger move,
So close the minions crowded nigh.

" From the raised vizor's shade, his eye,
Dark-rolling, glanced the ranks along,
And his steel truncheon, waved on high,
Seem'd marshalling the iron throng.

" But yet his sadden'd brow confess'd
A passing shade of doubt and awe ;
Some fiend was whispering in his breast,
' Beware of injured Bothwellhaugh ! '

" The death-shot parts—the charger springs —
Wild rises tumult's startling roar !
And Murray's plumed helmet rings—
Rings on the ground, to rise no more.

" What joy the raptured youth can feel,
To hear her love the loved one tell—
Or he, who broaches on his steel
The wolf, by whom his infant fell !

" But dearer to my injured eye
To see in dust proud Murray roll ;
And mine was ten times trebled joy,
To hear him groan his felon soul.

" My Margaret's spectre glided near ;
With pride her bleeding victim saw ;
And shriek'd in his death-deafen'd ear,
' Remember injured Bothwellhaugh ! '

" Then speed thee, noble Chatlerault !
Spread to the wind thy banner'd tree !
Each warrior bend his Clydesdale bow !—
Murray is fall'n, and Scotland free ! "

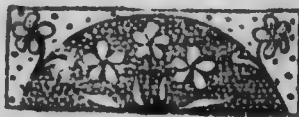
Vaults every warrior to his steed ;
Loud bugles join their wild acclaim—
" Murray is fall'n, and Scotland freed !
Couch, Arran ! couch thy spear of flame ! "

But, see ! the minstrel vision fails—
The glimmering spears are seen no more ;
The shouts of war die on the gales,
Or sink in Evan's lonely roar.

For the loud bugle, pealing high,
The blackbird whistles down the vale,
And sunk in ivied ruins lie
The banner'd towers of Evandale.

For Chiefs, intent on bloody deed,
And Vengeance shouting o'er the slain,
Lo ! high-born Beauty rules the steed,
Or graceful guides the silken rein.

And long may Peace and Plenty own
The maids who list the minstrel's tale ;
Nor e'er a ruder guest be known
On the fair banks of Evandale !





THE
LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

A POEM IN SIX CANTOS.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE Poem, now offered to the Public, is intended to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland. The inhabitants, living in a state partly pastoral and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredation with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry, were often engaged in scenes highly susceptible of poetical ornament. As the description of scenery and manners was more the object of the author than a combined and regular narrative, the plan of the Ancient Metrical Romance was adopted, which allows greater latitude, in this respect, than would be consistent with the dignity of a regular Poem. The same model offered other facilities, as it permits an occasional alteration of measure, which, in some degree, authorises the change of rhythm in the text. The machinery, also, adopted from popular belief, would have seemed puerile in a Poem which did not partake of the rudeness of the old Ballad or Metrical Romance.

For these reasons, the Poem was put into the mouth of an ancient Minstrel, the last of the race, who, as he is supposed to have survived the Revolution, might have caught somewhat of the refinement of modern poetry, without losing the simplicity of his original model. The date of the Tale itself is about the middle of the sixteenth century, when most of the personages actually flourished. The time occupied by the action is Three Nights and Three Days.

INTRODUCTION.

THE way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old ;
His wither'd cheek, and tresses grey,
Seem'd to have known a better day ;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the bards was he
Who sung of Border chivalry ;
For, welladay ! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead ;
And he, neglected and oppress'd,
Wish'd to be with them, and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey borne,
He caroll'd, light as lark at morn ;
No longer courted and caress'd,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He pour'd, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay :
Old times were changed, old manners gone ;
A stranger fill'd the Stuarts' throne ;
The bigots of the iron time
Had call'd his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorn'd and poor,
He begg'd his bread from door to door.
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp a king had loved to hear.

He pass'd where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower :
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—
No humbler resting-place was nigh,

With hesitating step at last,
The embattled portal arch he pass'd,
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar
Had oft roll'd back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door
Against the desolate and poor.
The Duchess mark'd his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell,
That they should tend the old man well :
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree ;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb !

When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride :
And he began to talk anon,
Of good Earl Francis, dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter, rest him, God !
A braver ne'er to battle rode ;
And how fully many a tale he knew,
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch :
And, would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain,
Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,
He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtain'd ;
The aged Minstrel audience gain'd.

But, when he reach'd the room of state,
Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
Perchance he wished his boon denied :
For, when to tune his harp he tried,
His trembling hand had lost the ease
Which marks security to please ;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
Came wildering o'er his aged brain—
He tried to tune his harp in vain !
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain,
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls ;
He had play'd it to King Charles the Good,
When he kept court in Holyrood ;
And much he wish'd, yet fear'd to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strain his fingers stray'd,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face, and smiled ;
And lighten'd up his faded eye,
With all a poet's ecstasy !
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along ;
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot ;
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,

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In the full tide of song were lost ;
Each blank in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied ;
And while his harp responsive rung,
'Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

THE feast was over in Branksome tower,
And the Layde had gone to her secret bower ;
Her bower that was guarded by word and by spell,
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—
Jesu Maria, shield us well !
No living wight, save the Ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

II.

The tables were drawn, it was idleness all ;
Knight, and page, and household squire,
Loiter'd through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire :
The staghounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretched upon the rushy floor,
And urged, in dreams, the forest race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.

III.

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome Hall ;
Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds to bower from stall ;

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Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
Waited, duteous, on them all ;
They were all knights of mettle true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

IV.

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
With belted sword, and spur on heel :
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day, nor yet by night ;
 They lay down to rest,
 With corslet laced,
Pillow'd on buckler cold and hard ;
 They carved at the meal
 With gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through the helmet
barr'd.

V.

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
Waited the beck of the warders ten ;
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Barbed with frontlet of steel, I trow,
And with Jedwood-axe at saddlebow ;
A hundred more fed free in stall :
Such was the custom of Branksome Hall.

VI.

Why do these steeds stand ready dight ?
Why watch these warriors, arm'd, by night ?—
They watch, to hear the blood-hound baying ;
They watch to hear the war-horn braying ;
To see St. George's red cross streaming,
To see the midnight beacon gleaming :

They watch against Southern force and guile,
Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
From Warkworth, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.

VII.

Such is the custom of Branksome Hall—
Many a valiant knight is here ;
But he, the chieftain of them all,
His sword hangs rusting on the wall,
Beside his broken spear.
Bards long shall tell
How Lord Walter fell !
When startled burghers fled, afar,
The furies of the Border war ;
When the streets of high Dunedin
Saw lances gleam and falchions redden,
And heard the slogan's deadly yell—
Then the Chief of Branksome fell.

VIII.

Can piety the discord heal,
Or stanch the death-feud's enmity ?
Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
Can love of blessed charity !
No ! vainly to each holy shrine,
In mutual pilgrimage they drew ;
Implored, in vain, the grace divine
For chiefs, their own red falchions slew :
While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,
While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
The slaughter'd chiefs, the mortal jar,
The havoc of the feudal war,
Shall never, never be forgot !

IX.

In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier
 The warlike foresters had bent ;
 And many a flower, and many a tear,
 Old Teviot's maids and matrons lent :
 But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
 The Ladye dropp'd nor flower nor tear !
 Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain,
 Had lock'd the source of softer woe ;
 And burning pride, and high disdain,
 Forbade the rising tear to flow ;
 Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
 Her son lisp'd from the nurse's knee—
 " And if I live to be a man,
 My father's death revenged shall be ! "
 Then fast the mother's tears did seek
 To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

X.

All loose her negligent attire,
 All loose her golden hair,
 Hung Margaret o'er her slaughter'd sire,
 And wept in wild despair ;
 But not alone the bitter tear
 Had filial grief supplied ;
 For hopeless love, and anxious fear,
 Had lent their mingled tide ;
 Nor in her mother's alter'd eye
 Dared she to look for sympathy.
 Her lover, 'gainst her father's clan,
 With Carr in arms had stood,
 When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran,
 All purple with their blood ;

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And well she knew, her mother dread,
Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed,
Would see her on her dying bed.

XI.

Of noble race the Ladye came,
Her father was a clerk of fame,
Of Bethune's line of Picardie ;
He learn'd the art that none may name,
In Padua, far beyond the sea.
Men said, he changed his mortal frame
By feat of magic mystery ;
For when, in studious mode, he paced
St. Andrew's cloister'd hall,
His form no darkening shadow traced
Upon the sunny wall !

XII.

And of his skill, as bards avow,
He taught that Ladye fair,
Till to her bidding she could bow
The viewless forms of air,
And now she sits in secret bower,
In old Lord David's western tower,
And listens to a heavy sound,
That moans the mossy turrets round.
Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,
That chafes against the scaur's red side ?
Is it the wind that swings the oaks ?
Is it the echo from the rocks ?
What may it be, the heavy sound,
That moans old Branksome's turrets round ?

XIII.

At the sullen, moaning sound,
The ban-dogs bay and howl;
And, from the turrets round,
Loud whoops the startled owl.
In the hall, both squire and knight
Swore that a storm was near,
And looked forth to view the night;
But the night was still and clear !

XIV.

From the sound of Teviot's tide,
Chafing with the mountain's side,
From the groan of the wind-swung oak,
From the sullen echo of the rock,
From the voice of the coming storm,
The Ladye knew it well !
It was the Spirit of the Flood that spoke,
And he call'd on the Spirit of the Fell.

XV.

RIVER SPIRIT.

"Sleep'st thou, brother !" —

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

— "Brother, nay—
On my hills the moon-beams play.
From Craik-cross to Skelfhill-pen,
By every rill, in every glen,
Merry elves their morris pacing,
To aerial minstrelsy,

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Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
Trip it deft and merrily.
Up, and mark their nimble feet !
Up, and list their music sweet !"—

XVI.

RIVER SPIRIT.

"Tears of an imprison'd maiden
Mix with my polluted stream ;
Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
Mourns beneath the moon's pale beam.
Tell me, thou, who view'st the stars,
When shall cease these feudal jars ?
What shall be the maiden's fate ?
Who shall be the maiden's mate ?"

XVII.

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

"Arthur's slow wain his course doth roll,
In utter darkness round the pole ;
The Northern Bear lowers black and grim ;
Orion's studded belt is dim ;
'Twinkling faint, and distant far,
Shimmers through mist each planet star :
Ill may I read their high decree !
But no kind influence deign they shower
On Teviot's tide, and Branksome's tower,
Till pride be quell'd, and love be free."

XVIII.

The unearthly voices ceast,
And the heavy sound was still ;

It died on the river's breast,
It died on the side of the hill.
But round Lord David's tower
The sound still floated near ;
For it rung in the Ladye's bower,
And it rung in the Ladye's ear.
She raised her stately head,
And her heart throb'd high with pride :—
" Your mountains shall bend
And your streams ascend,
Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride ! "

XIX.

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,
Where many a bold retainer lay,
And, with jocund din, among them all,
Her son pursued his infant play.
A fancied moss-trooper, the boy
The truncheon of a spear bestrode,
And round the hall, right merrily,
In mimic foray rode.
Even bearded knights, in arms grown old,
Share in his frolic gambols bore,
Albeit their hearts, of rugged mould,
Were stubborn as the steel they wore.
For the grey warriors prophesied
How the brave boy, in future war,
Should tame the Unicorn's pride,
Exalt the Crescent and the Star.

XX.

The Ladye forgot her purpose high,
One moment, and no more ;

One moment gazed with a mother's eye,
As she paused at the arched door :
Then from amid the armed train,
She called to her William of Deloraine.

XXI.

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,
As e'er couch'd Border lance by knee ;
Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross ;
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds ;
In Eske or Liddel, fords were none,
But he would ride them, one by one ;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow, or July's pride ;
Alike to him was tide or time,
Moonless midnight, or matin prime ;
Steady of heart, and stout of hand,
As ever drove prey from Cumberland ;
Five times outlaw'd had he been,
By England's King, and Scotland's Queen.

XXII.

" Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed ;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweedside ;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.
Greet the Father well from me ;
Say that the fated hour is come,

And to-night he shall watch with thee,
 To win the treasure of the tomb ;
 For this will be St. Michael's night,
 And, though the stars be dim, the moon is
 bright ;
 And the Cross, of bloody red,
 Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

XXIII.

" What he gives thee, see thou keep ;
 Stay not thou for food or sleep ;
 Be it scroll, or be it book,
 Into it, Knight, thou must not look ;
 If thou readest, thou art lorn !
 Better hadst thou ne'er been born.' —

XXIV.

" O swiftly can speed my dapple-grey steed,
 Which drinks of the Teviot clear ;
 Ere break of day," the Warrior 'gan say,
 " Again will I be here :
 And safer by none may thy errand be done,
 Than, noble dame, by me ;
 Letter nor line know I never a one,
 Wer't my neck-verse at Hairibee."

XXV.

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
 And soon the steep descent he past,
 Soon cross'd the sounding barbican,
 And soon the Teviot side he won.
 Eastward the wooded path he rode,
 Green hazeis o'er his bannet nod ;

He pass'd the Peel of Goldiland,
And cross'd old Borthwick's roaring strand ;
Dimly he view'd the Moat-hill's mound,
Where Druid shades still flitted round ;
In Hawick twinkled many a light :
Behind him soon they set in night ;
And soon he spurr'd his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

XXVI.

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark ;—
"Stand, ho ! thou courier of the dark."—
"For Branksome, ho !" the knight rejoin'd,
And left the friendly tower behind.
He turn'd him now from Teviotside,
And, guided by the tinkling rill,
Northward the dark ascent did ride,
And gain'd the moor at Horsliehill ;
Broad on the left before him lay,
For many a mile, the Roman way.

XXVII.

A moment now he slack'd his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed ;
Drew saddle-girth and corslet band,
And loosen'd in the sheath his brand.
On Minto-crag the moonbeams glint,
Where Barnhill hew'd his bed of flint ;
Who flung his outlaw'd limbs to rest,
Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye
For many a league his prey could spy ;
Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,
The terrors of the robber's horn !

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Cliffs, which, for many a later year,
The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
When some sad swain shall teach the grove,
Ambition is no cure for love !

XXVIII.

Unchallenged, thence pass'd Deloraine,
To ancient Riddel's fair domain,
Where Aill, from mountains freed,
Down from the lakes did raving come ;
Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
Like the main of a chestnut steed.
In vain ! no torrent, deep or broad,
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

XXIX.

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
And the water broke o'er the saddlebow ;
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen ;
For he was barded from counter to tail,
And the rider was armed complete in mail ;
Never heavier man and horse
Stemm'd a midnight torrent's force.
The warrior's very plume, I say,
Was draggled by the dashing spray ;
Yet, through good heart, and Our Ladye's grace,
At length he gained the landing-place.

XXX.

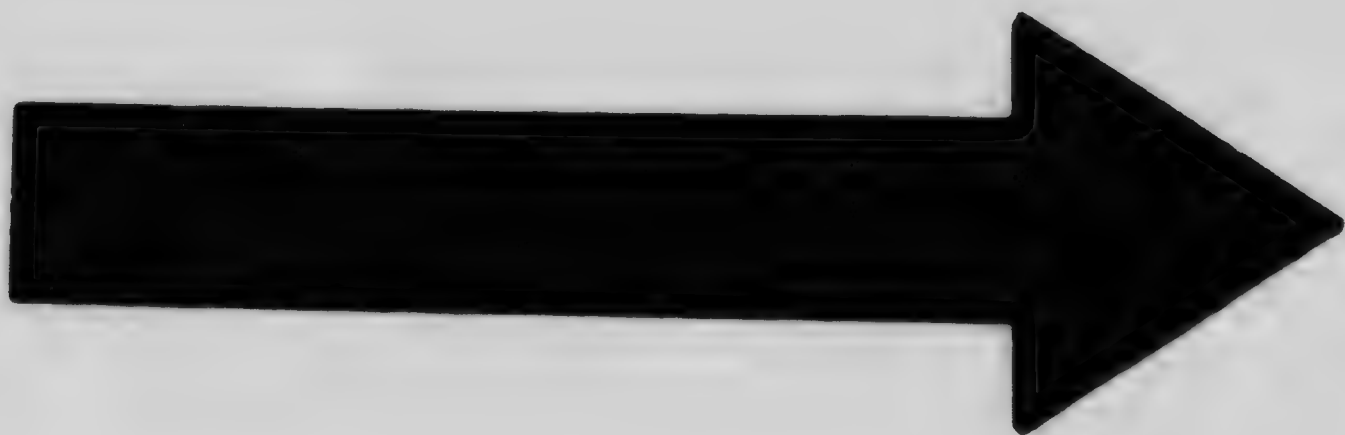
Now Bowden Moor the march-man won,
And sternly shook his plumed head,

As glanced his eye o'er Halidon ;
For on his soul the slaughter red
Of that unhallow'd morn arose,
When first the Scott and Carr were foes ;
When royal James beheld the fray,
Prize to the victor of the day ;
When Home and Douglas, in the van,
Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
Reek'd on dark Elliot's Border spear.

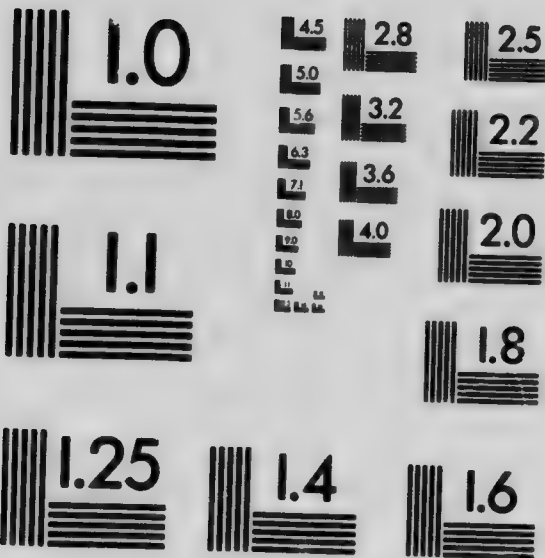
XXXI.

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
And soon the hated heath was past ;
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran :
Like some tall rock with lichens grey,
Seem'd dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
When Hawick he pass'd, had curfew rung,
Now midnight lauds were in Melrose sung.
The sound, upon the fitful gale,
In solemn wise did rise and fall,
Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
Is waken'd by the winds alone.
But when Melrose he reach'd, 'twas silence all ;
He meestly stabled his steed in stall,
And sought the convent's lonely wall.

HERE paused the harp ; and with its swell
The Master's fire and courage fell ;
Dejectedly, and low, he bow'd,
And, gazing timid on the crowd,



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He seem'd to seek, in every eye,
 If they approved his minstrelsy ;
 And diffident of present praise,
 Somewhat he spoke of former days,
 And how old age, and wand'ring long,
 Had done his hand and harp some wrong.
 The Duchess and her daughters fair,
 And every gentle lady there,
 Each after each, in due degree,
 Gave praises to his melody ;
 His hand was true, his voice was clear,
 And much they long'd the rest to hear.
 Encouraged thus, the Aged Man,
 After meet rest, again began.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,
 Go visit it by the pale moonlight :
 For the gay beams of lightsome day
 Gild, but to flout, the ruins grey.
 When the broken arches are black in night,
 And each shafted oriel glimmers white ;
 When the cold light's uncertain shower
 Streams on the ruin'd central tower ;
 When buttress and buttress, alternately,
 Seem framed of ebon and ivory ;
 When silver edges the imagery,
 And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die ;

When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
Then go—but go alone the while—
Then view St. David's ruin'd pile ;
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair !

II.

Short halt did Deloraine make there ;
Little reck'd he of the scene so fair ;
With dagger's hilt, on the wicket strong,
He struck full loud, and struck full long.
The porter hurried to the gate—
“ Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late ? ”
“ From Branksome I,” the warrior cried ;
And straight the wicket open'd wide :
For Branksome's Chiefs had in battle stood,
To fence the rights of fair Melrose ;
And lands and livings, many a rood,
Had gifted the shrine for their souls' repose.

III.

Bold Deloraine his errand said ;
The porter bent his humble head ;
With torch in hand, and feet unshod,
And noiseless step, the path he trod,
The arched cloister, far and wide,
Rang to the warrior's clanking stride,
Till, stooping low his lofty crest,
He enter'd the cell of the ancient priest,
And lifted his barr'd aventayle,
To hail the Monk of St. Mary's aisle,

IV.

"The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me
 Says, that the fated hour is come,
 And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
 To win the treasure of the tomb."
 From sackcloth couch the Monk arose,
 With toil his stiffen'd limbs he rear'd;
 A hundred years had flung their snows
 On his thin locks and floating beard.

V.

And strangely on the Knight look'd he,
 And his blue eyes gleam'd wild and wide;
 "And, darest thou, Warrior! seek to see
 What heaven and hell alike would hide?
 My breast, in belt of iron pent,
 With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn;
 For threescore years, in penance spent,
 My knees those flinty stones have worn:
 Yet all too little to atone
 For knowing what should ne'er be known.
 Would'st thou thy every future year
 In ceaseless prayer and penance dree,
 Yet wait thy latter end with fear—
 Then, daring Warrior, follow me!"—

VI.

"Penance, father, will I none;
 Prayer know I hardly one;
 For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
 Save to patter an Ave Mary,
 When I ride on a Border foray.
 Other prayer can I none;
 So speed me my errand, and let me be gone."—

VII.

Again on the Knight look'd the Churchman old,
And again he sighed heavily ;
For he had himself been a warrior bold,
And fought in Spain and Italy.
And he thought on the days that were long
since by,
When his limbs were strong, and his courage was
high :—
Now, slow and faint, he led the way,
Where, cloister'd round, the garden lay ;
The pillar'd arches were over their head,
And beneath their feet were the bones of the dead.

VIII.

Spreading herbs, and flowerets bright,
Glisten'd with the dew of night ;
Nor herb, nor floweret, glisten'd there,
But was carved in the cloister arches as fair.
The monk gazed long on the lovely moon,
Then into the night he looked forth ;
And red and bright the streamers light
Were dancing in the glowing north.
So had he seen, in fair Castille,
The youth in glittering squadrons start ;
Sudden the flying jennet wheel,
And hurl the unexpected dart.
He knew by the streamers that shot so bright,
That spirits were riding the northern light.

IX.

By a steel-clenched postern door,
They entered now the chancel tall ;

The darken'd roof rose high aloof
 On pillars lofty and light and small :
 The key-stone, that lock'd each ribbed aisle,
 Was a fleur-de-lys, or a quarte-feuille ;
 The corbells were carved grotesque and grim ;
 And the pillars, with cluster'd shafts so trim,
 With base and with capital flourished around,
 Seem'd bundles of lances which garlands had
 bound.

X.

Full many a scutcheon and banner riven
 Shook to the cold night-wind of heaven,
 Around the screened altars pale ;
 And there the dying lamps did burn,
 Before thy low and lonely urn,
 O gallant Chief of Otterburne !
 And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale !
 O fading honours of the dead !
 O high ambition, lowly laid !

XI.

The moon on the east oriel shone
 Through slender shafts of shapely stone,
 By foliaged tracery combined ;
 Thou wouldst have thought some fairy's hand
 'Twixt poplars straight the ozier wand,
 In many a freakish knot, had twined ;
 Then framed a spell when the work was done,
 And changed the willow-wreaths to stone.
 The silver-light, so pale and faint,
 Show'd many a prophet, and many a saint,
 Whose image on the glass was dyed ;

Full in the midst, the Cross of Red
Triumphant Michael brandished,
And trampled the Apostate's pride.
The moon-beam kiss'd the holy pane,
And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.

XII.

They sate them down on a marble stone,
(A Scottish monarch slept below ;)
Thus spoke the Monk in solemn tone :—
“ I was not always a man of woe ;
For Paynim countries I have trod,
And fought beneath the Cross of God :
Now, strange to my eyes thine arms appear,
And their iron clang sounds strange to my ear.

XIII.

“ In these far climes it was my lot
To meet the wondrous Michael Scott,
A wizard, of such dreaded fame,
That when, in Salamanca's cave,
Him listed his magic wand to wave,
The bells would ring in Notre Dame !
Some of his skill he taught to me ;
And, Warrior, I could say to thee
The words that cleft Eildon hills in three,
And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone :
But to speak them were a deadly sin ;
And for having but thought them my heart within
A treble penance must be done.

XIV.

“ When Michael lay on his dying bed,
His conscience was awakened :

He bethought him of his sinful deed,
 And he gave me a sign to come with speed ;
 I was in Spain when the morning rose,
 But I stood by his bed ere evening close.
 The words may not again be said,
 That he spoke to me, on death-bed laid ;
 They would rend this Abbaye's massy nave,
 And pile it in heaps above his grave.

XV.

" I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
 That never mortal might therein look ;
 And never to tell where it was hid,
 Save at his Chief of Branksome's need :
 And when that need was past and o'er,
 Again the volume to restore.
 I buried him on St. Michael's night,
 When the bell toll'd one, and the moon was bright,
 And I dug his chamber among the dead,
 When the floor of the chancel was stained red,
 That his patron's cross might over him wave,
 And scare the fiends from the Wizard's grave.

XVI.

" It was a night of woe and dread,
 When Michael in the tomb I laid !
 Strange sounds along the chancel pass'd,
 The banners waved without a blast ;"—
 Still spoke the Monk, when the bell toll'd one :—
 I tell you, that a braver man
 Than William of Deloraine, good at need,
 Against a foe ne'er spurr'd a steed ;
 Yet somewhat was he chill'd with dread,
 And his hair did bristle upon his head.

XVII.

"Lo, Warrior ! now, the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead ;
Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night :
That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be."—
Slow moved the Monk to the broad flagstone,
Which the bloody Cross was traced upon :
He pointed to a secret nook ;
An iron bar the Warrior took ;
And the Monk made a sign with his withered hand
The grave's huge portal to expand.

XVIII.

With beating heart to the task he went
His sinewy frame o'er the grave-stone bent ;
With bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows, like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength
That he moved the massy stone at length.
I wish I had been there, to see
How the light broke forth so gloriously,
Striving upward to the chancel roof,
And through the galleries far aloof !
No earthly flame blazed e'er so bright :
It shone like heaven's own blessed light,
And, issuing from the tomb,
Show'd the Monk's cowl, and visage pale,
Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's mail,
And kiss'd his waving plume.

G-g

XIX.

Before their eyes the Wizard lay,
As if he had not been dead a day.
His hoary beard in silver roll'd,
He seem'd some seventy winters old ;
A palmer's amice wrapp'd him round,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea ;
His left hand held his Book of Might ;
A silver cross was in his right ;
The lamp was placed beside his knee ;
High and majestic was his look,
At which the fellest fiends had shook,
And all unruffled was his face :
They trusted his soul had gotten grace.

XX.

Often had William of Deloraine
Rode through the battle's bloody plain,
And trampled down the warriors slain,
And neither known remorse nor awe :
Yet now remorse and awe he own'd ;
His breath came thick, his head swam round,
When this strange scene of death he saw.
Bewilder'd and unnerved he stood,
And the priest pray'd fervently and loud :
With eyes averted prayed he ;
He might not endure the sight to see,
Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

XXI.

And when the priest his death-prayer had pray'd,
Thus unto Deloraine he said :—

" Now, speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue ;
For those, thou may'st not look upon,
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone ! " —
Then Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasp'd, and with iron bound :
He thought, as he took it, the dead man frown'd ;
But the glare of the sepulchral light,
Perchance, had dazzled the warrior's sight.

XXII.

When the huge stone sunk o'er the tomb,
The night return'd in double gloom ; [few ;
For the moon had gone down, and the stars were
And, as the Knight and Priest withdrew,
With wavering steps and dizzy brain,
They hardly might the postern gain.
'Tis said, as through the aisles they pass'd,
They heard strange noises on the blast :
And through the cloister-galleries small,
Which at mid-height thread the chancel wall,
Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,
And voices ur' the voice of man ;
As if the fiends kept holiday,
Because these spells were brought to day.
I cannot tell how the truth may be :
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

XXIII.

" Now, hie thee hence," the Father said,
" And when we are on death-bed laid,
O may our dear Lady, and sweet St. John,
Forgive our souls for the deed we have done ! "

The Monk return'd him to his cell,
 And many a prayer and penance sped ;
 When the convent met at the noontide bell—
 The Monk of St. Mary's aisle was dead !
 Before the cross was the body laid,
 With hands clasp'd fast, as if still he pray'd.

XXIV.

The Knight breathed free in the morning wind,
 And strove his hardihood to find :
 He was glad when he pass'd the tombstones grey,
 Which girdle round the fair Abbaye ;
 For the mystic Pook, to his bosom prest,
 Felt like a load upon his breast ;
 And his joints, with nerves of iron twined,
 Shook, like the aspen leaves in wind.
 Full fain was he when the dawn of day
 Began to brighten Cheviot grey ;
 He joy'd to see the cheerful light,
 And he said Ave Mary, as well as he might.

XXV.

The sun had brighten'd Cheviot grey,
 The sun had brighten'd the Carter's side ;
 And soon beneath the rising day
 Smiled Branksome Towers and Teviot's tide.
 The wild birds told their warbling tale,
 And waken'd every flower that blows ;
 And peep'd forth the violet pale,
 And spread her breast the mountain rose.
 And lovelier than the rose red,
 Yet paler than the violet pale,
 She early left her sleepless bed,
 The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

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XXVI.

Why does fair Margaret so early awake,
And don her kirtle so hastily ?
And the silken knots, which in hurry she would
make,
Why tremble her slender fingers to tie ?
Why does she stop, and look often around,
As she glides down the secret stair ?
And why does she pat the shaggy blood-hound,
As he rouses him up from his lair ?
And though she passes the postern alone,
Why is not the watchman's bugle blown ?

XXVII.

The ladye steps in doubt and dread,
Lest her watchful mother hear her tread ;
The ladye caresses the rough blood-hound,
Lest his voice should waken the castle round,
The watchman's bugle is not blown,
For he was her foster-father's son ;
And she glides through the greenwood at dawn of
light
To meet Baron Henry, her own true knight.

XXVIII.

The Knight and ladye fair are met,
And under the hawthorn's boughs are set.
A fairer pair were never seen
To meet beneath the hawthorn green.
He was stately, and young, and tall ;
Dreaded in battle, and loved in hall :
And she, when love, scarce told, scarce hid,
Lent to her cheek a livelier red ;

When the half-sigh her swelling breast
 Against the silken ribbon prest ;
 When her blue eyes their secret told,
 Though shaded by her locks of gold—
 Where would you find the peerless fair,
 With Margaret of Branksome might compare !

XXIX.

And now, fair dames, methinks I see
 You listen to my minstrelsy ;
 Your waving locks ye backward throw,
 And sidelong bend your necks of snow ;
 Ye ween to hear a melting tale,
 Of two true lovers in a dale ;
 And how the Knight, with tender fire,
 To paint his faithful passion strove ;
 Swore he might at her feet expire,
 But never, never cease to love ;
 And how she blush'd, and how she sigh'd,
 And half consenting, half denied,
 And said that she would die a maid ;—
 Yet, might the bloody feud be stay'd,
 Henry of Cranstoun, and only he,
 Margaret of Branksome's choice should be.

XXX.

Alas ! fair dames, your hopes are vain !
 My harp has lost the enchanting strain ;
 Its lightness would my age reprove ;
 My hairs are grey, my limbs are old,
 My heart is dead, my veins are cold ;
 I may not, must not, sing of love.

XXXI.

Beneath an oak, moss'd o'er by eld,
The Baron's Dwarf his courser held,
And held his crested helm and spear :
That Dwarf was scarce an earthly man,
If the tales were true that of him ran
Through all the Border far and near.
'Twas said, when the Baron a-hunting rode,
Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely trod,
He heard a voice cry, "Lost ! lost ! lost !"
And, like tennis-ball by racket toss'd,
A leap of thirty feet and three,
Made from the gorse this elfin shape,
Distorted like some dwarfish ape,
And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's knee.
Lord Cranstoun was some whit dismay'd ;
'Tis said that five good miles he rade,
To rid him of his company ;
But where he rode one mile, the Dwarf ran four
And the Dwarf was first at the castle door.

XXXII.

Use lessens marvel, it is said :
This elvish Dwarf with the Baron staid :
Little he ate, and less he spoke,
Nor mingled with the menial flock :
And oft apart his arms he toss'd,
And often mutter'd "Lost ! lost ! lost !"
He was waspish, arch, and litherlie,
But well Lord Cranstoun served he :
And he of his service was full fain ;
For once he had been ta'en or slain,
And it had not been for his ministry.

All between Home and Hermitage,
Talk'd about Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page.

XXXIII.

For the Baron went on Pilgrimage,
And took with him this elvish Page,
To Mary's Chapel of the Lowes ;
For there beside our Lady's lake,
An offering he had sworn to make,
And he would pay his vows.
But the Lady of Branksome gather'd a band
Of the best that would ride at her command :
The trysting place was Newark Lee.
Wat of Harden came thither amain,
And thither came John of Thirlestane,
And thither came William of Deloraine ;
They were three hundred spears and three.
Through Douglas-burn, up Yarrow stream,
Their horses prance, their lances gleam.
They came to St. Mary's lake ere day ;
But the chapel was void, and the Baron away.
They burn'd the chapel for very rage,
And cursed Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page.

XXXIV.

And now, in Branksome's good green wood,
As under the aged oak he stood,
The Baron's courser pricks his ears,
As if a distant noise he hears.
The Dwarf waves his long, lean arm on high,
And signs to the lovers to part and fly ;
No time was then to vow or sigh.
Fair Margaret through the hazel grove,
Flew like the startled cushat-dove :

The Dwarf the stirrup held and rein ;
Vaulted the Knight on his steed amain,
And, pondering deep that morning's scene,
Rode eastward through the hawthorns green.

WHILE thus he pour'd the lengthen'd tale
The Minstrel's voice began to fail :
Full slyly smiled the observant page,
And gave the wither'd hand of age
A goblet crown'd with mighty wine,
The blood of Velez' scorched vine.
He raised the silver cup on high,
And, while the big drop fill'd his eye,
Pray'd God to bless the Duchess long,
And all who cheer'd a son of song.
The attending maidens smiled to see
How long, how deep, how zealously,
The precious juice the Minstrel quaff'd ;
And he, embolden'd by the draught,
Look'd gaily back to them, and laugh'd.
The cordial nectar of the bowl
Swell'd his own veins, and cheer'd his soul ;
A lighter, livelier, prelude ran,
Ere thus his tale again began.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

AND said I that my limbs were old,
And said I that my blood was cold,
And that my kindly fire was fled,
And my poor wither'd heart was dead,

And that I might not sing of love ?—
 How could I to the dearest theme,
 That ever warmed a minstrel's dream,
 So foul, so false a recreant prove !
 How could I name love's very name,
 Nor wake my heart to notes of flame !

II.

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed ;
 In war, he mounts the warrior's steed ;
 In halls, in gay attire is seen ;
 In hamlets, dances on the green.
 Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
 And men below, and saints above ;
 For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

III.

So thought Lord Cranstoun, as I ween,
 While, pondering deep the tender scene,
 He rode through Branksome's hawthorn green.
 But the Page shouted wild and shrill,
 And scarce his helmet could he don,
 When downward from the shady hill
 A stately knight came pricking on.
 That warrior's steed, so dapple-grey,
 Was dark with sweat, and splash'd with clay ;
 His armour red with many a stain ;
 He seem'd in such a weary plight,
 As if he had ridden the live-long night ;
 For it was William of Deloraine.

IV.

But no whit weary did he seem,
 When, dancing in the sunny beam,

He mark'd the crane on the baron's crest ;
For his ready spear was in his rest.
Few were the words, and stern and high,
That mark'd the foemen's feudal hate ;
For question fierce, and proud reply,
Gave signal soon of dire debate.
Their very coursers seem'd to know
That each was other's mortal foe,
And snorted fire, when wheel'd around
To give each knight his vantage-ground.

V.

In rapid round the Baron bent ;
He sigh'd a sigh, and pray'd a prayer ;
The prayer was to his patron saint,
The sigh was to his ladye fair.
Stout Deloraine nor sigh'd nor pray'd,
Nor saint, nor ladye, called to aid ;
But he stoop'd his head, and couched his spear,
And spurr'd his steed to full career.
The meeting of these champions proud
Seem'd like the bursting thunder-cloud.

VI.

Stern was the dint the Borderer lent !
The stately Baron backwards bent ;
Bent backwards to his horse's tail,
And his plumes went scattering on the gale.
The tough ash spear, so stout and true,
Into a thousand flinders flew.
But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,
Pierced through, like silk, the Borderer's mail ;
Through shield, and jack, and acton past,

Deep in his bosom, broke at last—
 Still sate the warrior saddle-fast,
 Till, stumbling in the mortal shock,
 Down went the steed, the girthing broke,
 Hurl'd on a heap lay man and horse.
 The Baron onward pass'd his course ;
 Nor knew—so giddy rolled his brain—
 His foe lay stretch'd upon the plain.

VII.

But when he rein'd his courser round,
 And saw his foeman on the ground
 Lie senseless as the bloody clay,
 He bade his page to stanch the wound,
 And there beside the warrior stay,
 And tend him in his doubtful state,
 And lead him to Branksome castle-gate :
 His noble mind was inly moved
 For the kinsman of the maid he loved.
 " This shalt thou do without delay :
 No longer here myself may stay ;
 Unless the swifter I speed away,
 Short shrift will be at my dying day."

VIII.

Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode ;
 The Goblin Page behind abode ;
 His lord's command he ne'er withstood,
 Though small his pleasure to do good.
 As the corslet off he took,
 The dwarf espied the Mighty Book !
 Much he marvell'd a knight of pride,
 Like a book-bosom'd priest should ride ;

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He thought not to search or stanch the wound,
Until the secret he had found.

IX.

The iron band, the iron clasp,
Resisted long the elfin grasp :
For when the first he had undone,
It closed as he the next begun.
Those iron clasps, that iron band,
Would not yield to unchristen'd hand,
Till he smear'd the cover o'er
With the Borderer's curdled gore ;
A moment then the volume spread,
And one short spell therein he read.
It had much of glamour might,
Could make a ladye seem a knight ;
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in lordly hall ;
A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
A sheiling seem a palace large,
And youth seem age, and age seem youth--
All was delusion, nought was truth.

X.

He had not read another spell,
When on his cheek a buffet fell,
So fierce, it stretch'd him on the plain,
Beside the wounded Deloraine.
From the ground he rose dismay'd,
And shook his huge and matted head ;
One word he mutter'd, and no more,
" Man of age, thou smitest sore ! "

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No more the Elfin Page durst try
Into the wondrous Book to pry ;
The clasps, though smear'd with Christian gore,
Shut faster than they were before.
He hid it underneath his cloak. —
Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
I cannot tell, so mot I thrive ;
It was not given by man alive.

XI.

Unwillingly himself he address'd,
To do his master's high behest :
He lifted up the living corse,
And laid it on the weary horse ;
He led him into Branksome Hall,
Before the beards of the warders all ;
And each did after swear and say,
'There only pass'd a wain of hay.
He took him to Lord David's tower,
Even to the Ladye's secret bower ;
And but that stronger spells were spread,
And the door might not be opened,
He had laid him on her very bed.
Whate'er he did of gramarye,
Was always done maliciously ;
He flung the warrior on the ground,
And the blood well'd freshly from the wound.

XII.

As he repass'd the outer court,
He spied the fair young child at sport ;
He thought to train him to the wood ;
For, at a word, be it understood,

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL. 111

He was always for ill, and never for good.
Seem'd to the boy, some comrade gay
Led him forth to the woods to play ;
On the drawbridge the warders stout
Saw a terrier and lurcher passing out.

XIII.

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,
Until they came to a woodland brook ;
The running stream dissolved the spell,
And his own elvish shape he took.
Could he have had his pleasure vilde,
He had crippled the joints of the noble child ;
Or, with his fingers long and lean,
Had strangled him in fiendish spleen ;
But his awful mother he had in dread,
And also his power was limited ;
So he but scowl'd on the startled child,
And darted through the forest wild ;
The woodland brook he bounding cross'd,
And laugh'd and shouted, "Lost ! lost ! lost !"

XIV.

Full sore amazed at the wondrous change,
And frighten'd as a child might be,
At the wild yell and visage strange,
And the dark words of gramarye,
The child, amidst the forest bower,
Stood rooted like a lily flower ;
And when, at length, with trembling pace,
He sought to find where Branksome lay,
He fear'd to see that grisly face
Glare from some thicket on his way.

Thus, starting oft, he journey'd on,
 And deeper in the wood is gone—
 For aye the more he sought his way,
 The farther still he went astray—
 Until he heard the mountains round
 Ring to the baying of a hound.

XV.

And bark ! and bark ! the deep-mouth'd bark
 Comes nigher still, and nigher :
 Bursts on the path a dark blood-hound,
 His tawny muzzle track'd the ground,
 And his red eye shot fire.
 Soon as the wilder'd child saw he
 He flew at him right furiously.
 I ween you would have seen with joy
 The bearing of the gallant boy,
 When, worthy of his noble sire,
 His wet cheek glow'd 'twixt fear and ire !
 He faced the blood-hound manfully,
 And held his little bat on high ;
 So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
 At cautious distance hoarsely bay'd,
 But still in act to spring ;
 When dash'd an archer through the glade,
 And when he saw the hound was stay'd,
 He drew his tough bow-string ;
 But a rough voice cried, "Shoot not, hoy !
 Ho ! shoot not, Edward—'Tis a boy !"

XVI.

The speaker issued from the wood,
 And check'd his fellow's surly mood,
 And quell'd the ban-dog's ire :

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He was an English yeoman good,
And born in Lancashire,
Well could he hit a fallow-deer
Five hundred feet him fro ;
With hand more true, and eye more clear,
No archer bended bow.
His coal-black hair, shorn round and close,
Set off his sun-burn'd face :
Old England's sign, St. George's cross,
His barret-cap did grace ;
His bugle-horn hung by his side,
All in a wolf-skin baldric tied ;
And his short falchion, sharp and clear,
Had pierced the throat of many a deer.

XVII.

His kirtle, made of forest green,
Reach'd scanty to his knee ;
And, at his belt, of arrows keen
A furbish'd sheaf bore he :
His buckler, scarce in breadth a span,
No larger fence had he ;
He never counted him a man
Would strike below the knee ;
His slacken'd bow was in his hand,
And the leash, that was his blood-hound's band.

XVIII.

He would not do the fair child harm,
But held him with his powerful arm,
That he might neither fight nor flee ;
For when the Red-Cross spied he,
The boy strove long and violently.

H-H

"Now, by St. George," the archer cries,
 "Edward, methinks we have a prize !
 This boy's fair face, and courage free,
 Show he is come of high degree."—

XIX.

"Yes ! I am come of high degree,
 For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch ;
 And if thou dost not set me free,
 False Southron, thou shalt dearly rue !
 For Walter of Harden shall come with speed,
 And William of Deloraine, good at need,
 And every Scott, from Esk to Tweed ;
 And if thou dost not let me go,
 Despite thy arrows and thy bow,
 I'll have thee hang'd to feed the crow !"

XX.

"Gramercy, for thy good-will, fair boy !
 My mind was never set so high ;
 But if thou art chief of such a clan,
 And art the son of such a man,
 And ever comest to thy command,
 Our wardens had need to keep good order ;
 My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
 Thou'lt make them work upon the Border.
 Meantime, be pleased to come with me,
 For good Lord Dacre shalt thou see ;
 I think our work is well begun,
 When we have taken thy father's son."

XXI.

Although the child was led away,
 In Branksome still he seem'd to stay,

For so the Dwarf his part did play ;
And, in the shape of that young boy,
He wrought the castle much annoy.
The comrades of the young Buccleuch
He pinch'd, and beat, and overthrew ;
Nay, some of them he well-nigh slew.
He tore Dame Mandlin's silken tire,
And, as Slyn Hall stood by the fire,
He lighted the match of his bandelier,
And wofully scorch'd the backbuteer.
It may be hardly thought or said
The mischief that the urchin made,
Till many of the castle guess'd
That the young Baron was possess'd !

XXII.

Well I ween the charm he held
The noble Ladye had soon dispell'd ;
But she was deeply busied then
To tend the wounded Deloraine.
Much she wonder'd to find him lie
On the stone threshold stretch'd along ;
She thought some spirit of the sky
Had done the bold moss-trooper wrong ;
Because, despite her precept dread,
Perchance he in the Book had read ;
But the broken lance in his bosom stood,
And it was earthly steel and wood.

XXIII.

She drew the splinter from the wound,
And with a charm she stanch'd the blood ;
She bade the gash be cleansed and bound ;
No longer by his couch she stood ;

But she has ta'en the broken lance,
 And wash'd it from the clotted gore,
 And salved the splinter o'er and o'er.
 William of Deloraine, in trance,
 Whene'er she turn'd it round and round,
 Twisted as if she gall'd his wound.
 Then to her maidens she did say,
 That he should be whole man and sound,
 Within the course of a night and day.
 Full long she toil'd ; for she did rue
 Mishap to friend so stout and true.

XXIV.

So pass'd the day—the evening fell,
 'Twas near the time of curfew bell ;
 The air was mild, the wind was calm,
 The stream was smooth, the dew was balm ;
 E'en the rude watchman, on the tower,
 Enjoy'd and bless'd the lovely hour.
 Far more fair Margaret loved and bless'd
 The hour of silence and of rest.
 On the high turret sitting lone,
 She waked at times the lute's soft tone ;
 Touch'd a wild note, and all between
 Thought of the bower of hawthorns green.
 Her golden hair stream'd free from band,
 Her fair cheek rested on her hand,
 Her blue eyes sought the west afar,
 For lovers love the western star.

XXV.

Is yon the star, o'er Penchryst Pen,
 That rises slowly to her ken,
 And, spreading broad its wavering light,

Shakes its loose tresses on the night ?
Is yon red glare the western star ?—
O, 'tis the beacon-blaze of war !
Scarce could she draw her tighten'd breath,
For well she knew the fire of death !

XXVI.

The Warder view'd it blazing strong,
And blew his war-note loud and long,
Till, at the high and haughty sound,
Rock, wood, and river rung around.
The blast alarm'd the festal hall,
And startled forth the warriors all ;
Far downward, in the castle-yard,
Full many a torch and cresset glared ;
And helms and plumes, confusedly toss'd,
Were in the blaze half-seen, half-lost ;
And spears in wild disorder shook,
Like reeds beside a frozen brook.

XXVII.

The Seneschal, whose silver hair
Was redden'd by the torches' glare,
Stood in the midst, with gesture proud,
And issued forth his mandates loud :
"On Penchryst glows a bale of fire,
And three are kindling on Priestthaughswire ;
Ride out, ride out,
The foe to scout !
Mount, mount for Branksome, every man,
Thou, Todrig, warn the Johnstone clan,
That ever are true and stout—
Ye need not send to Liddesdale ;
For when they see the blazing bale,

Elliot's and Armstrongs never fail.—
 Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life !
 And warn the Warder of the strife,
 Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,
 Our kin, and clan, and friends to raise."

XXVIII.

Fair Margaret from the turret head,
 Heard, far below, the coursers' tread,
 While loud the harness rung,
 As to their seats, with clamour dread,
 The ready horsemen sprung :
 And trampling hoofs, and iron coats,
 And leaders' voices, mingled notes,
 And out ! and out !
 In hasty route,
 The horsemen gallop'd forth ;
 Dispersing to the south to scout,
 And east, and west, and north,
 To view their coming enemies,
 And warn their vassals and allies.

XXIX.

The ready page, with hurried hand,
 Awaked the need-fire's slumbering brand,
 And ruddy blush'd the heaven :
 For a sheet of flame, from the turret high,
 Waved like a blood-flag on the sky,
 All flaring and uneven ;
 And soon a score of fires, I ween,
 From height, and hill, and cliff, were seen ;
 Each with warlike tidings fraught ;
 Each from each the signal caught ;

Each after each they glanced to sight,
As stars arise upon the night.
They gleam'd on many a dusky tarn,
Haunted by the lonely earn ;
On many a cairn's grey pyramid,
Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid ;
Till high Dunedin the blazes saw,
From Soltra and Dumpender Law :
And Lothian heard the Regent's order,
That all should bowne them for the Border.

XXX.

The livelong night in Branksome rang
The ceaseless sound of steel ;
The castle-bell, with backward clang,
Sent forth the 'larum peal ;
Was frequent heard the heavy jar,
Where massy stone and iron bar
Were piled on echoing keep and tower,
To whelm the foe with deadly shower ;
Was frequent heard that changing guard,
And watchword from the sleepless ward ;
While, wearied by the endless din,
Blood-hound and ban-dog yell'd within.

XXXI.

The noble dame, amid the broil,
Shared the grey Seneschal's high toil,
And spoke of danger with a smile ;
Cheer'd the young knights, and council sage
Held with the chiefs of riper age.
No tidings of the foe were brought,
Nor of his numbers knew they aught,
Nor what in time of truce he sought.

Some said, that there were thousands ten ;
 And others ween'd that it was nought
 But Leven Clans, or Tynedale men,
 Who came to gather in black-mail ;
 And Liddesdale, with small avail,
 Might drive them lightly back agen.
 So pass'd the anxious night away,
 And welcome was the peep of day.

CEASED the high sound—the listening throng
 Applaud the Master of the Song ;
 And marvel much, in helpless age,
 So hard should be his pilgrimage.
 Had he no friend—no daughter dear,
 His wandering toil to share and cheer ?
 No son to be his father's stay,
 And guide him on the rugged way !
 " Ay, once he had—but he was dead ! "—
 Upon the harp he stoop'd his head,
 And busied himself the strings withal,
 To hide the tear that fain would fall.
 In solemn measure, soft and slow,
 Arose a father's notes of woe.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

SWEET Teviot ! on thy silver tide
 The glaring bale-fires blaze no more ;
 No longer steel-clad warriors ride
 Along thy wild and willow'd shore ;

Where'er thou wind'st, by dale or hill,
All, all is peaceful, all is still,
As if thy waves, since Time was born,
Since first they roll'd upon the Tweed,
Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
Nor started at the bugle horn.

II.

Unlike the tide of human time,
Which, though it change in ceaseless flow,
Retains each grief, retains each crime
Its earliest course was doom'd to know ;
And, darker as it downward bears,
Is stain'd with past and present tears.
Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,
It still reflects to Memory's eye
The hour my brave, my only boy,
Fell by the side of great Dundee.
Why, when the volleying musket play'd
Against the bloody Highland blade,
Why was not I beside him laid !—
Enough—he died the death of fame !
Enough—he died with conquering Græme.

III.

Now over Border, dale, and fell,
Full wide and far was terror spread ;
For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,
The peasant left his lowly shed.
The frighten'd flocks and herds were pent
Beneath the peel's rude battlement :
And maids and matrons dropp'd the tear,
While ready warriors seized the spear.

From Branksome's towers, the watchman's eye
 Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,
 Which, curling in the rising sun,
 Show'd southern ravage was begun.

IV.

Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried—
 "Prepare ye all for blows and blood !
 Wat Tinlinn, from the Liddel-side,
 Comes wading through the flood.
 Full oft the Tynedale snatchers knock
 At his lone gate, and prove the lock ;
 It was but last St. Barnabright
 They sieged him a whole summer night,
 But fled at morning ; well they knew,
 In vain he never twang'd the yew.
 Right sharp has been the evening shower
 That drove him from his Liddel tower ;
 And by my faith," the gate-ward said,
 "I think 'twill prove a Warden-Raid."

V.

While thus he spoke, the bold yeoman
 Enter'd the echoing barbican.
 He led a small and shaggy nag,
 That through a bog, from hag to hag,
 Could bound like any Billihope stag.
 It bore his wife and children twain ;
 A half-clothed serf was all their train ;
 His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-brow'd,
 Of silver brooch and bracelet proud,
 Laugh'd to her friends among the crowd.

He was of stature passing tall,
But sparely form'd, and lean withal ;
A batter'd morion on his brow ;
A leather jack, as fence enow,
On his broad shoulders loosely hung ;
A border axe behind was slung ;
His spear, six Scottish ells in length,
Seem'd newly dyed with gore ;
His shafts and bow, of wondrous strength,
His hardy partner bore.

VI.

Thus to the Ladye did Tinlinn show
The tidings of the English foe :—
“ Belted Will Howard is marching here,
And hot Lord Dacre with many a spear,
And all the German hackbut-men,
Who have long lain at Askerten :
They cross'd the Liddel at curfew hour,
And burn'd my little lonely tower :
The fiend receive their souls therefor !
It had not been burnt this year and more.
Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing bright,
Served to guide me on my flight ;
But I was chased the livelong night.
Black John of Akeshaw, and Fergus Græme,
Fast upon my traces came,
Until I turn'd at Priesthaugh Scrogg,
And shot their horses in the bog,
Slew Fergus with my lance outright—
I had him long at high despite ;
He drove my cows last Fasten's night.”

VII.

Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,
Fast hurrying in, confirm'd the tale ;
As far as they could judge by ken,
Three hours would bring to Teviot's strand
Three thousand armed Englishmen—
Meanwhile, full many a warlike band,
From Teviot, Aill, and Ettrick shade,
Came in, their Chief's defence to aid.
There was saddling and mounting in haste,
There was pricking o'er moor and lea :
He that was last at the trysting place
Was but lightly held of his gay layde.

VIII.

From fair St. Mary's silver wave,
From dreary Gamescleugh's dusky height,
His ready lances Thirlestane brave
Array'd beneath a banner bright.
The treasured fleur-de-luce he claims,
To wreath his shield, since royal James,
Encamp'd by Fala's mossy wave,
The proud distinction grateful gave,
For faith 'mid feudal jars ;
What time, save Thirlestane alone,
Of Scotland's stubborn barons none
Would march to southern wars ;
And hence, in fair remembrance worn,
Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne ;
Hence his high motto shines reveal'd—
"Ready, aye ready," for the field.

IX.

An aged Knight, to danger steel'd,
With many a moss-trooper, came on :
And azure in a golden field,
The stars and crescent graced his shield,
Without the bond of Murdieston.
Wide lay his lands round Oakwood tower,
And wide round haunted Castle-Ower ;
High over Borthwick's mountain flood,
His wood-embosom'd mansion stood,
In the dark glen, so deep below,
The herds of plunder'd England low ;
His bold retainers' daily food,
And bought with danger, blows, and blood.
Marauding chief ! his sole delight
The moonlight raid, the morning fight ;
Not even the Flower of Yarrow's charms,
In youth, might tame his rage for arms ;
And still, in age, he spurn'd at rest,
And still his brows the helmet press'd,
Albeit the blanched locks below
Were white as Dinley's spotless snow ;
Five stately warriors drew the sword
Before their father's band ;
A braver knight than Harden's lord
Ne'er belted on a brand.

X.

Scotts of Eskdale, a stalwart band,
Came trooping down the Todshawhill ;
By the sword they won their land,
And by the sword they hold it still.

Harken, Ladye, to the tale,
 How thy sires won fair Eskdale :—
 Earl Morton was lord of that valley fair,
 The Beattisons were his vassals there.
 The Earl was gentle and mild of mood,
 The vassals were warlike, and fierce, and rude ;
 High of heart, and haughty of word,
 Little they reck'd of a tame liege lord.
 The Earl into fair Eskdale came,
 Homage and seignory to claim :
 Of Gilbert the Galliard a heriot he sought,
 Saying, "Give thy best steed, as a vassal ought."
 —"Dear to me is my bonny white steed,
 Oft has he help'd me at pinch of need ;
 Lord and Earl though thou be, I trow,
 I can rein Bucksfoot better than thou."
 Word on word gave fuel to fire,
 Till so highly blazed the Beattisons' ire
 But that the Earl the flight had ta'en,
 The vassals there their lord had slain.
 Sore he plied both whip and spur,
 As he urged his steed through Eskdale muir ;
 And it fell down a weary weight,
 Just at the threshold of Branksome gate.

XI.

The Earl was a wrathful man to see,
 Full fain avenged would he be.
 In haste to Branksome's Lord he spoke,
 Saying—"Take these traitors to thy yoke ;
 For a cast of hawks, and a purse of gold,
 All Eskdale I'll sell thee, to have and hold ;
 Beshrew thy heart, of the Beattisons' clan
 If thou leavest on Eske a landed man ;

But spare Woodkerrick's lands alone,
For he lent me his horse to escape upon."
A glad man then was Branksome bold,
Down he flung him the purse of gold :
To Eskdale soon he spurr'd amain,
And with him five hundred riders has ta'en.
He left his merry men in the mist of the hills,
And bade them hold them close and still ;
And alone he wended to the plain,
To meet with the Galliard and all his train.
To Gilbert the Galliard thus he said :—
" Know thou me for thy liege-lord and head,
Deal not with me as with Morton tame,
For Scotts play best at the roughest game.
Give me in peace my heriot due,
Thy bonny white steed, or thou shalt rue,
If my horn I three times wind,
Eskdale shall long have the sound in mind."

XII.

Loudly the Beattison laugh'd in scorn ;
" Little care we for thy winded horn.
Ne'er shall it be the Galliard's lot,
To yield his steed to a haughty Scott.
Wend thou to Branksome back on foot,
With rusty spur and miry boot."—
He blew his bugle so loud and hoarse,
That the dun deer started at fair Craikcross :
He blew again so loud and clear, [appear :
Through the grey mountain mist there did lances
And the third blast rang with such a din,
That the echoes answer'd from Pentounlinn,
And all his riders came lightly in.

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Then had you seen a gallant shock,
When saddles were emptied, and lances broke !
For each scornful word the Galliard had said,
A Beattison on the field was laid.
His own good sword the Chieftain drew,
And he bore the Galliard through and through :
Where the Beattison's blood mix'd with the rill,
The Galliard's-Haugh men call it still.
The Scotts have scatter'd the Beattison clan,
In Eskdale they left but one landed man.
The valley of Eske, from the mouth to the source,
Was lost and won for that bonny white horse.

XIII.

Whitslade the Hawk, and Headshaw came,
And warriors more than I may name ;
From Yarrow-cleugh to Hindhaugh-swair,
From Woodhouselie to Chester-glen,
Troop'd man and horse, and bow and spear ;
Their gathering word was Bellenden.
And better hearts o'er Border sod
To siege or rescue never rode.
The Ladye mark'd the aids come in,
And high her heart of pride arose :
She bade her youthful son attend,
That he might know his father's friend,
And learn to face his foes.
" The boy is ripe to look on war ;
I saw him draw a cross-bow stiff,
And his true arrow struck afar
The raven's nest upon the cliff ;
The red cross, on a southern breast,
Is broader than the raven's nest :

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL 129

Thou, Whitalade, shalt teach him his weapon to wield
And o'er him hold his father's shield."

XIV.

Well may you think, the wily page
Cared not to face the Ladye sage.
He counterfeited childish fear,
And shriek'd, and shed full many a tear,
And moan'd and plain'd in manner wild.
The attendants to the Ladye told,
Some fairy, sure, had changed the child,
That wont to be so free and bold.
Then wrathful was the noble dame ;
She blush'd blood-red for very shame :—
" Hence ! ere the clan his faintness view ;
Hence with the weakling to Buccleuch !—
Wat Tinlinn, thou shalt be his guide
To Rangleburn's lonely side.—
Sure some fell fiend has cursed our line,
That coward should e'er be son of mine !"—

XV.

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,
To guide the counterfeited lad.
Soon as the palfrey felt the weight
Of that ill-omen'd elfish freight,
He bolted, sprung, and rear'd amain,
Nor leeded bit, nor curb, nor rein,
It cost Watt Tinlinn mickle toil
To drive him but a Scottish mile ;
But as a shallow brook they cross'd,
The elf, amid the running stream,
His figure changed, like form in dream,
And fled, and shouted, " Lost ! lost ! lost !"

Full fast the urchin ran and laugh'd,
But faster still a cloth-yard shaft
Whistled from startled Tinlinn's yew,
And pierced his shoulder through and through.
Although the imp might not be slain,
And though the wound soon heal'd again,
Yet, as he ran, he yell'd for pain ;
And Watt of Tinlinn, much aghast,
Rode back to Branksome fiery fast.

XVI.

Soon on the hill's steep verge he stood,
That looks o'er Branksome's towers and wood ;
And martial murmurs, from below,
Proclaim'd the approaching southern foe.
Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,
Were Border pipes and bugles blown ;
The coursers' neighing he could ken,
A measured tread of marching men ;
While broke at times the solemn hum,
The Almayn's sullen kettle-drum ;
And banners tall, of crimson sheen,
Above the copse appear ;
And, glistening through the hawthorns green,
Shine helm, and shield, and spear.

XVII.

Light forayers, first, to view the ground,
Spurr'd their fleet coursers loosely round ;
Behind, in close array, and fast,
The Kendal archers, all in green,
Obedient to the bugle blast,
Advancing from the wood were seen.

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To back and guard the archer band,
Lord Dacre's bill-men were at hand ;
A hardy race, on Breching bred,
With kirtles white, and crosses red,
Array'd beneath the banner tall,
That stream'd o'er Dacre's conquer'd wall ;
And minstrels, as they march'd in order,
Play'd " Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on the
Border."

XVIII.

Behind the English bill and bow,
The mercenaries, firm and slow,
Moved on to fight, in dark array,
By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,
Who brought the band from distant Rhine,
And sold their blood for foreign pay.
The camp their home, their law the sword,
They knew no country, own'd no lord :
They were not arm'd like England's sons,
But bore the levin-darting guns ;
Buff-coats, all frounced and broider'd o'er,
And morsin-horns and scarfs they wore ;
Each better knee was bared, to aid
The warriors in the escalade ;
All, as they march'd, in rugged tongue,
Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung.

XIX.

But louder still the clamour grew,
And louder still the minstrels blew,
When, from beneath the greenwood tree,
Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry ;

His men-at-arms, with glaive and spear,
 Brought up the battle's glittering rear,
 There many a youthful knight full keen
 To gain his spurs, in arms was seen ;
 With favour in his crest, or glove,
 Memorial of his ladye-love.
 So rode they forth in fair array,
 Till full their lengthen'd lines display ;
 Then call'd a halt, and made a stand,
 And cried, " St. George for merry England ! "

XX

Now every English eye, intent
 On Branksome's armed towers was bent ;
 So near they were, that they might know
 The straining harsh of each cross-bow ;
 On battlement and bartizan
 Gleam'd axe, and spear, and partisan ;
 Falcon and culver, on each tower,
 Stood prompt their deadly hail to shower ;
 And flashing armour frequent broke
 From eddying whirls of sable smoke,
 Where upon tower and turret head,
 The seething pitch and molten lead
 Reek'd, like a witch's caldron red.
 While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,
 The wicket opes, and from the wall
 Rides forth the hoary Seneschal.

XXI.

Armed he rode, all save the head,
 His white beard o'er his breast-plate spread ;
 Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
 He ruled his eager courser's gait ;

Forced him, with chasten'd fire, to prance,
And, high curveting, slow advance :
In sign of truce, his better hand
Display'd a peeled willow wand ;
His squire, attending in the rear,
Bore high a gauntlet on a spear.
When they espied him riding out,
Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stout
Sped to the front of their array,
To hear what this old knight should say.

XXII.

" Ye English warden lords, of you
Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,
Why, 'gainst the truce of Border tide,
In hostile guise ye dare to ride,
With Kendal bow, and Gilsland brand,
And all yon mercenary band,
Upon the bounds of fair Scotland ?
My Ladye red - you swith return ;
And, if but straw you burn,
Or do our to - much molest
As scare one swallow from her nest,
St. Mary ! but we'll light a brand
Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland."—

XXIII.

A wrathful man was Dacre's lord,
But calmer Howard took the word :
" May't please my Dame, Sir Seneschal,
To seek the castle's outward wall,
Our pursuivant at-arms shall show
Both why we come, and when we go."—

The message sped, the noble Dame
 To the wall's outward circle came ;
 Each chief around lean'd on his spear,
 To see the pursuivant appear.
 All in Lord Howard's livery dress'd,
 The lion argent deck'd his breast ;
 He led a boy of blooming hue—
 O sight to meet a mother's view !
 It was the heir of great Buccleuch.
 Obeisance meet the herald made,
 And thus his master's will he said :—

XXIV.

" It irks, high Dame, my noble Lords,
 'Gainst ladye fair to draw their swords ;
 But yet they may not tamely see,
 All through the Western Wardenry,
 Your law-contemning kinsmen ride,
 And burn and spoil the Border-side ;
 And ill beseems your rank and birth
 To make your towers a flemens-firth.
 We claim from thee William of Deloraine,
 That he may suffer march-treason pain.
 It was but last St. Cuthbert's even
 He prick'd to Stapleton on Leven,
 Harried the lands of Richard Musgrave,
 And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
 Then, since a lone and widow'd Dame
 These restless riders may not tame,
 Either receive within thy towers
 Two hundred of my master's powers,
 Or straight they sound their warrison,
 And storm and spoil thy garrison :

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And this fair boy, to London led,
Shall give King Edward's page be bred."

XXV.

He ceased—and loud the boy did cry,
And stretch'd his little arms on high ;
Implored for aid each well-known face,
And strove to seek the Dame's embrace.
A moment changed that Ladye's cheer,
Gush'd to her eye the unbidden tear ;
She gazed upon the leaders round,
And dark and sad each warrior frown'd ;
Then, deep within her sobbing breast
She lock'd the struggling sigh to rest ;
Unalter'd and collected stood,
And thus replied, in dauntless mood :—

XXVI.

" Say to your Lords of high emprise,
Who war on women and on boys,
That either William of Deloraine
Will cleanse him, by oath, of march-treason stain,
Or else he will the combat take
'Gainst Musgrave, for his honour's sake.
No knight in Cumberland so good,
But William may count with him kin and blood.
Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,
When English blood swell'd Ancram's ford ;
And but Lord Dacre's steed was wight,
And bare him ably in the flight,
Himself had seen him dubb'd a knight.
For the young heir of Branksome's line,
God be his aid, and God be mine ;

Through me no friend shall meet his doom ;
 Here, while I live, no foe finds room.
 Then, if thy Lords their purpose urge,
 Take our defiance loud and high ;
 Our slogan is their lyke-wake dirge,
 Our moat, the grave where they shall lie."

XXVII.

Proud she look'd round, applause to claim—
 Then lighten'd Thirlestane's eye of flame ;
 His bugle Wat of Harden blew ;
 Pensils and pennons wide were flung,
 To heaven the Border slogan rung,
 "St. Mary for the young Buccleuch !"
 The English war-cry answer'd wide,
 And forward bent each southern spear ;
 Each Kendal archer made a stride,
 And drew the bowstring to his ear ;
 Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown :—
 But, ere a grey-goose shaft had flown,
 A horseman gallop'd from the rear.

XXVIII.

"Ah ! noble Lords !" he breathless said,
 "What treason has your march betray'd ?
 What make you here, from aid so far,
 Before you walls, around you war ?
 Your foemen triumph in the thought,
 That in the toils the lion's caught.
 Already on dark Ruberslaw
 The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw ;
 The lances, waving in his train,
 Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain ;

And on the Liddel's northern strand,
To bar retreat to Cumberland,
Lord Maxwell ranks his merry-men good,
Beneath the eagle and the rood ;
And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviotdale,
Have to proud Angus come ;
And all the Merse and Lauderdale
Have risen with haughty Home.
An exile from Northumberland,
In Liddesdale I've wander'd long ;
But still my heart was with merry England,
And cannot brook my country's wrong ;
And hard I've spurr'd all night to show
The mustering of the coming foe."

XXIX.

"And let them come !" fierce Dacre cried ;
"For soon yon crest, my father's pride,
That swept the shores of Judah's sea,
And waved in gales of Galilee,
From Branksome's highest towers display'd,
Shall mock the rescue's lingering aid !—
Level each harquebuss on row ;
Draw, merry archers, draw the bow ;
Up, bill-men, to the walls, and cry,
Dacre for England, win or die !"

XXX.

"Yet hear," quoth Howard, "calmly hear
Nor deem my words the words of fear :
For who, in field or foray slack,
Saw the blanche lion e'er fall back ?
But thus to risk our Border flower
In strife against a kingdom's power,

Ten thousand Scots 'gainst thousands three,
 Certes, were desperate policy.
 Nay, take the terms the Ladye made,
 Ere conscious of the advancing aid :
 Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine
 In single fight, and, if he gain,
 He gains for us : but if he's cross'd,
 'Tis but a single warrior lost :
 The rest, retreating as they came,
 Avoid defeat, and death, and shame."

XXXI.

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
 His brother Warden's sage rebuke ;
 And yet his forward step he staid,
 And slow and sullenly obey'd.
 But ne'er again the Border side
 Did these two lords in friendship ride ;
 And this slight discontent, men say,
 Cost blood upon another day.

XXXII.

The pursuivant-at-arms again
 Before the castle took his stand ;
 His trumpet call'd, with parleying strain,
 The leaders of the Scottish band ;
 And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
 Stout Deloraine to single fight ;
 A gauntlet at their feet he laid,
 And thus the terms of fight he said :—
 " If in the lists good Musgrave's sword
 Conquish the Knight of Deloraine,
 Your youthful chieftain, Branksome's Lord,
 Shall hostage for his clan remain :

If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
The boy his liberty shall have.

Howe'er it falls, the English band,
Unharming Scots, by Scots unharm'd.
In peaceful march, like men unarm'd,
Shall straight retreat to Cumberland."

XXXIII.

Unconscious of the near relief,
The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,
Though much the Ladye sage gainsay'd ;
For though their hearts were brave and true.
From Jedwood's recent sack they knew,

How tardy was the Regent's aid :
And you may guess the noble Dame

Durst not the secret prescience own,
Sprung from the art she might not name,
By which the coming help was known.

Closed was the compact, and agreed
That lists should be enclosed with speed,
Beneath the castle, on a lawn ;

They fix'd the morrow for the strife,
On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,

At the fourth hour from peep of dawn :
When Deloraine, from sickness freed,
Or else a champion in his stead,
Should for himself and chieftain stand,
Against stout Musgrave, hand to hand.

XXXIV.

I know right well, that, in their lay,
Full many minstrels sing and say,
Such combat should be made on horse,

On foaming steed, in full career,
 With brand to aid, when as the spear
 Should shiver in the course :
 But he, the jovial Harper, taught
 Me, yet a youth, how it was fought,
 In guise which now I say ;
 He knew each ordinance and clause
 Of Black Lord Archibald's battle-laws,
 In the old Douglas' day.
 He brook'd not, he, that scoffing tongue
 Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,
 Or call his song untrue :
 For this, when they the goblet plied,
 And such rude taunt had chafed his pride,
 The Bard of Reull he slew.
 On Teviot's side, in fight they stood,
 And tuneful hands were stain'd with blood ;
 Where still the thorn's white branches wave,
 Memorial o'er his rival's grave.

XXXV.

Why should I tell the rigid doom,
 That dragg'd my master to his tomb :
 How Ousenam's maidens tore their hair,
 Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,
 And wrung their hands for love of him,
 Who died at Jedwood Air !
 He died !—his scholars, one by one,
 To the cold silent grave are gone ;
 And I, alas ! survive alone,
 To muse o'er rivalries of yore,
 And grieve that I shall hear no more
 The strains, with envy heard before ;

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL. 141

For, with my minstrel brethren fled,
My jealousy of song is dead.

He paused : the listening dames again
Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.
With many a word of kindly cheer--
In pity half, and half sincere--
Marvell'd the Duchess how so well
His legendary song could tell--
Of ancient deeds, so long forgot ;
Of feuds, whose memory was not ;
Of forests, now laid waste and bare ;
Of towers, which harbour now the hare ;
Of manners, long since changed and gone ;
Of chiefs, who under their grey stone
So long had slept, that fickle Fame
Had blotted from her rolls their name,
And twined round some new minion's head
The fading wreath for which they bled ;
In sooth, 'twas strange, this old man's verse
Could call them from their marble hearse.

The Harper smiled, well-pleased ; for ne'er
Was flattery lost on poet's ear :
A simple race ! they waste their toil
For the vain tribute of a smile :
E'en when in age their flame expires,
Her dulcet breath can fan its fires :
Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,
And strives to trim the short-lived blaze.

Smiled then, well-pleased, the Aged Man,
And thus his tale continued ran.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

CALL it not vain :—they do not err,
Who say, that when the Poet dies,
Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
And celebrates his obsequies :
Who say, tall cliff, and cavern lone,
For the departed Bard make moan ;
That mountains weep in crystal rill ;
That flowers in tears of balm distil ;
Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,
And oaks, in deeper groan, reply ;
And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave.

II.

Not that, 'n sooth, o'er mortal urn
Those things inanimate can mourn ;
But that the stream, the wood, the gale,
Is vocal with the plaintive wail
Of those, who, else forgotten long,
Lived in the poet's faithful song,
And, with the poet's parting breath,
Whose memory feels a second death.
The Maid's pale shade, who wails her lot,
That love, true love, should be forgot,
From rose and hawthorn shakes the tear
Upon the gentle Minstrel's bier :
The phantom Knight, his glory fled,
Mourns o'er the field he heap'd with dead ;
Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain,
And shrieks along the battle-plain.

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL 143

The Chief, whose antique crownlet long
Still sparkled in the feudal song,
Now, from the mountain's misty throne,
Sees, in the thanedom once his own,
His ashes undistinguish'd lie,
His place, his power, his memory die :
His groans the lonely caverns fill,
His tears of rage impel the rill :
All mourn the Minstrel's harp unstrung,
Their name unknown, their praise unsung.

III.

Scarcely the hot assault was staid,
The terms of truce were scarcely made,
When they could spy from Branksome's towers,
The advancing march of martial powers.
Thick clouds of dust afar appear'd,
And trampling steeds were faintly heard ;
Bright spears, above the columns dun,
Glanced momentary to the sun ;
And feudal banners fair display'd
The bands that moved to Branksome's aid.

IV.

Vails not to tell each hardy clan,
From the fair Middle Marches came ;
The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,
Announcing Douglas, dreaded name !
Vails not to tell what steeds did spurn,
Where the Seven Spears of Wedderburne
Their men in battle-order set ;
And Swinton laid the lance in rest,
That tamed of yore the sparkling crest
Of Clarence's Plantagenet.

Nor list, I say, what hundreds more,
 From the rich Merse and Lammermore,
 And Tweed's fair borders, to the war,
 Beneath the crest of Old Dunbar
 And Hepburn's mingled banners come,
 Down the steep mountain glittering far,
 And shouting still, "A Home! a Home!"

V.

Now squire and knight, from Branksome sent,
 On many a courteous message went;
 To every chief and lord they paid
 Meet thanks for prompt and powerful aid;
 And told them—how a truce was made,
 And how a day of fight was ta'en
 'Twixt Musgrave and stout Deloraine;
 And how the Ladye pray'd them dear,
 That all would stay the fight to see,
 And deign, in love and courtesy,
 To taste of Branksome cheer.
 Nor, while they bade to feast each Scot,
 Were England's noble Lords forgot.
 Himself, the hoary Seneschal,
 Rode forth, in seemly terms to call
 Those gallant foes to Branksome Hall.
 Accepted Howard, than whom knight
 Was never dubb'd more bold in fight;
 Nor, when from war and armour free,
 More famed for stately courtesy;
 But angry Dacre rather chose
 In his pavilion to repose.

VI.

Now, noble Dame, perchance you ask,
How these two hostile armies met ?
Deeming it were no easy task
To keep the truce which here was set ;
Where martial spirits, all on fire,
Breathed only blood and mortal ire. —
By mutual inroads, mutual blows,
By habit, and by nation, foes,
They met on Teviot's strand ;
They met and sate them mingled down,
Without a threat, without a frown,
As brothers meet in foreign land :
The hands, the spear that lately grasp'd,
Still in the mailed gauntlet clasp'd,
Were interchanged in greeting dear ;
Visors were raised, and faces shown,
And many a friend, to friend made known,
Partook of social cheer.
Some drove the jolly bowl about ,
With dice and draughts some chased the day ;
And some, with many a merry shout,
In riot, revelry, and rout,
Pursued the foot-ball play.

VII.

Yet, be it known, had bugles blown,
Or sign of war been seen,
Those bands, so fair together ranged,
Those hands, so frankly interchanged,
Had dyed with gore the green :
The merry shout by Teviot-side
Had sunk in war-cries wild and wide,
And in the groan of death ;

K-K

And whingers now in friendship bare,
 The social meal to part and share,
 Had found a bloody sheath.
 'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change
 Was not infrequent, nor held strange,
 In the old Border-day :
 But yet on Branksome's towers and town,
 In peaceful merriment, sunk down
 The sun's declining ray.

VIII.

The blithesome signs of wassel gay
 Decay'd not with the dying day ;
 Soon through the latticed windows tall
 Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,
 Divided square by shafts of stone,
 Huge flakes of ruddy lustre shone ;
 Nor less the gilded rafters rang
 With merry harp and boakers' clang :
 And frequent, on the darkening plain,
 Loud hollo, whoop, or whistle ran,
 As bands, their stragglers to regain,
 Give the shrill watchword of their clan ;
 And revellers, o'er their bowls, proclaim
 Douglas or Dacre's conquering name.

IX.

Less frequent heard, and fainter still,
 At length the various clamours died :
 And you might hear from Branksome hill,
 No sound but Teviot's rushing tide ;

Save when the changing sentinel
The challenge of his watch could tell ;
And save where, through the dark profound,
The clanging axe and hammer's sound
Rung from the nether lawn ;
For many a busy hand toil'd there,
Strong pales to shape, and beams to square,
The lists' dread barriers to prepare
Against the morrow's dawn.

X.

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
Despite the Dame's reproving eye ;
Nor mark'd she, as she left her seat,
Full many a stifled sigh ;
For many a noble warrior strove
To win the Flower of Teviot's love,
And many a bold ally.
With throbbing head and anxious heart,
All in her lonely bower apart,
In broken sleep she lay ;
By times, from silken couch she rose ;
While yet the banner'd hosts repose,
She view'd the dawning day ;
Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,
First woke the loveliest and the best.

XI.

She gazed upon the inner court,
Which in the tower's tall shadow lay ;
Where coursers' clang, and stamp, and snort,
Had rung the livelong yesterday ;
Now still as death ; till stalking slow—
The jingling spurs announced his tread,

A stately warrior pass'd below ;
 But when he raised his plumed head—
 Bless'd Mary ! can it be !
 Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
 He walks through Branksome's hostile towers,
 With fearless step and free.
 She dared not sign, she dared not speak—
 Oh ! if one page's slumbers break,
 His blood the price must pay !
 Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,
 Not Margaret's yet more precious tears,
 Shall buy his life a day.

XII.

Yet was his hazard small ; for well
 You may bethink you of the spell
 Of that sly urchin page ;
 This to his lord he did impart,
 And made him seem, by glamour art,
 A knight from Hermitage.
 Unchallenged thus, the warder's post,
 The court, unchallenged, thus he cross'd,
 For all the vassalage :
 But O ! what magic's quaint disguise
 Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes !
 She started from her seat ;
 While with surprise and fear she strove,
 And both could scarcely master love—
 Lord Henry's at her feet.

XIII.

Oft have I mused, what purpose bad
 That foul malicious urchin had
 To bring this meeting round ;

For happy love's a heavenly sight,
And by a vile, malignant sprite
In such no joy is found ;
And oft I've deem'd, perchance he thought
Their erring passion might have wrought
Sorrow, and sin, and shame ;
And death to Cranstoun's gallant Knight,
And to the gentle ladye bright,
Disgrace, and loss of fame.
But earthly spirit could not tell
The heart of them that loved so well.
True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the heaven ;
It is not fantasy's hot fire,
Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly ;
It liveth not in fierce desire,
With dead desire it doth not die ;
It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind.—
Now leave we Margaret and her Knight,
To tell you of the approaching fight.

XIV.

Their warning blasts the bugles blew,
The pipe's shrill port aroused each clan ;
In haste, the deadly strife to view,
The trooping warriors eager ran :
Thick round the lists their lances stood,
Like blasted pines in Ettrick wood ;
To Branksome many a look they threw,
The combatants' approach to view,

And bandied many a word of boast,
About the knight each favour'd most.

XV.

Meantime full anxious was the Dame ;
For now arose disputed claim,
Of who should fight for Deloraine,
'Twixt Harden and 'twixt Thirlestane :
They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,
And frowning brow on brow was bent ;
But yet not long the strife—for, lo !
Himself, the Knight of Deloraine,
Strong, as it seem'd, and free from pain,
In armour sheath'd from top to toe,
Appear'd, and craved the combat due.
The Dame her charm successful knew,
And the fierce chiefs their claims withdrew.

XVI.

When for the lists they sought the plain,
The stately Ladye's silken rein
Did noble Howard hold ;
Unarmèd by her side he walk'd.
And much in courteous phrase they talk'd
Of feats of arms of old.
Costly his garb—his Flemish ruff
Fell o'er his doublet, shaped of buff,
With satin slash'd and lined ;
Tawny his boot, and gold his spur,
His cloak was all of Poland fur,
His hose with silver twined ;
His Bilboa blade, by Marchmen felt,
Hung in a broad and studded belt ;

Hence, in rude phrase, the Borderers still
Call'd noble Howard, Belted Will.

XVII.

Behind Lord Howard and the Dame
Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,
Whose foot-cloth swept the ground :
White was her whimple and her veil,
And her loose locks a chaplet pale
Of whitest roses bound ;
The lordly Angus by her side,
In courtesy to cheer her tried ;
Without his aid her hand in vain
Had strove to guide her broider'd rein.
He deem'd she shudder'd at the sight
Of warriors met for mortal fight ;
But cause of terror, all unguess'd,
Was fluttering in her gentle breast,
When, in their chairs of crimson placed,
The Dame and she the barriers graced.

XVIII.

Prize of the field, the young Buccleuch,
An English knight led forth to view ;
Scarce rued the boy his present plight,
So much he longed to see the fight.
Within the lists, in knightly pride,
High Home and haughty Dacre ride :
Their leading staffs of steel they wield,
As marshals of the mortal field ;
While to each knight their care assign'd
Like vantage of the sun and wind.

The heralds hoarse did loud proclaim,
In King and Queen and Warden's name,
That none, while lasts the strife,
Should dare, by look, or sign, or word,
Aid to a champion to afford,
On peril of his life ;
And not a breath the silence broke,
Till thus the alternate Herald spoke :

XIX.

ENGLISH HERALD.

" Here standeth Richard of Musgrave,
Good knight and true, and freely born,
Amends from Deloraine to crave,
For foul despicable scathe and scorn.
He sayeth that William of Deloraine
Is traitor false by Border laws ;
This with his sword he will maintain,
So help him God, and his good cause ! "

XX.

SCOTTISH HERALD.

" Here standeth William of Deloraine,
Good knight and true, of noble strain,
Who sayeth that foul treason's stain,
Since he bore arms, ne'er soil'd his coat ;
And that, so help him God above !
He will on Musgrave's body prove,
He lies most foully in his throat. "

LORD DACRE.

" Forward, brave champions, to the fight !
Sound trumpets ! " —

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LORD HOME

—"God defend the right!"

Then, Teviot! how thine echoes rang,
When bugle-sound and trumpet clang
Let loose the martial foes,
And in mid list with shield poised high,
And measured step and wary eye,
The combatants did close.

XXI.

Ill would it suit your gentle ear,
Ye lovely listeners, to hear
How to the axe the helms did sound,
And blood pour'd down from many a wound;
For desperate was the strife and long,
And either warrior fierce and strong.
But, were each dame a listening knight,
I well could tell how warriors fight!
For I have seen war's lightning flashing,
Seen the claymore with bayonet clashing,
Seen through red blood the war-horse dashing,
And scorn'd, amid the reeling strife,
To yield a step for death or life.

XXII.

'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
Has stretch'd him on the bloody plain!
He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave, no!
Thence never shalt thou rise again!
He chokes in blood—some friendly hand
Undo the visor's barred band,
Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,
And give him room for life to gasp!—
O, bootless aid!—haste, holy Friar,

Haste, ere the sinner shall expire !
 Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
 And smooth his path from earth to heaven !

XXIII.

In haste the holy Friar sped ;—
 His naked foot was dyed with red,
 As through the lists he ran ;
 Unmindful of the shouts on high,
 That hail'd the conqueror's victory,
 He raised the dying man ;
 Loose waved his silver beard and hair,
 As o'er him he kneel'd down in prayer ;
 And still the crucifix on high
 He holds before his darkening eye ;
 And still he bends an anxious ear,
 His faltering penitence to hear ;
 Still props him from the bloody sod,
 Still, even when soul and body part,
 Pours ghostly comfort on his heart,
 And bids him trust in God !
 Unheard he prays ;—the death pang's o'er !
 Richard of Musgrave breathes no more.

XXIV.

As if exhausted in the fight,
 Or musing o'er the piteous sight,
 The silent victor stands :
 His beaver did he not unclasp,
 Mark'd not the shouts, felt not the grasp
 Of gratulating hands.
 When lo ! strange cries of wild surprise,
 Mingled with seeming terror, rise
 Among the Scottish bands :

And all, amid the throng'd array,
In panic haste gave open way
To a half-naked ghastly man,
Who downward from the castle ran :
He cross'd the barriers at a bound,
And wild and haggard look'd around,
As dizzy, and in pain ;
And all upon the armed ground
Knew William of Deloraine !
Each lady sprung from seat with speed ;
Vaulted each marshal from his steed ;
" And who art thou," they cried,
" Who hast this battle fought and won ?"—
His plumed helm was soon undone—
" Cranstoun of Teviot-side !
For this fair prize I've fought and won,"—
And to the Ladye led her son.

XXV.

Full oft the rescued boy she kiss'd,
And often press'd him to her breast ;
For, under all her dauntless show,
Her heart had throbb'd at every blow ;
Yet not Lord Cranstoun deign'd she greet,
Though low he kneeled at her feet.
Me lists not tell what words were made,
What Douglas, Home, and Howard said—
—For Howard was a generous foe—
And how the clan united pray'd
The Ladye would the feud forego,
And deign to bless the nuptial hour
Of Cranstoun's Lord and Teviot's Flower.

XXVI.

She look'd to river, look'd to hill,
 Thought on the Spirit's prophecy,
 Then broke her silence stern and still—
 "Not vain but Fate has vanquish'd me.
 Their influence kindly stars may shower
 On Teviot's side and Branksome's tower,
 For pride is quell'd, and love is free."—
 She took fair Margaret by the hand,
 Who, breathless, scarce might stand,
 That hand to Cranstoun's lord gave she;—
 "As I am true to thee and thine,
 Do thou be true to me and mine!
 This clasp of love our bond shall be;
 For this is your betrothing day,
 And all these noble lords shall stay,
 To grace it with their company."

XXVII.

All as they left the listed plain,
 Much of the story she did gain;
 How Cranstoun fought with Deloraine,
 And of his page, and of the Book
 Which from the wounded knight he took;
 And how he sought her castle high,
 That morn, by help of gramarye;
 How, in Sir William's armour dight,
 Stolen by his page, while slept the knight,
 He took on him the single fight.
 But half his tale he left unsaid,
 And linger'd till he join'd the maid.
 Cared not the Ladye to betray
 Her mystic arts in view of day

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But well she thought, ere midnight came,
Of that strange page the pride to tame,
From his foul hands the Book to save,
And send it back to Michael's grave.—
Needs not to tell each tender word
'Twixt Margaret and 'twixt Cranstoun's lord ;
Nor how she told of former woes,
And how her bosom fell and rose,
While he and Musgrave bandied blows.—
Needs not these lovers' joys to tell :
One day, fair maids, you'll know them well.

XXVIII.

William of Deloraine, some chance
Had waken'd from his death-like trance ;
And taught that, in the listed plain,
Another, in his arms and shield,
Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,
Under the name of Deloraine.
Hence, to the field, unarm'd, he ran,
And hence his presence scared the clan,
Who held him for some fleeting wraith,
And not a man of blood and breath.
Not much this new ally he loved,
Yet, when he saw what hap had proved,
He greeted him right heartilie :
He would not waken old debate,
For he was void of rancorous hate,
Though rude and scant of courtesy ;
In raids he spilt but seldom blood,
Unless when men-at-arms withstood,
Or, as was meet for deadly feud.
He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart blow.
Ta'en in fair fight from gallant foe ;

And so 'twas seen of him, e'en now,
 When on dead Musgrave he look'd down ;
 Grief darken'd on his rugged brow,
 Though half disguised with a frown ;
 And thus, while sorrow bent his head,
 His foeman's epitaph he made :

XXIX.

" Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here !
 I ween my deadly enemy ;
 For if I slew thy brother dear,
 Thou slew'st a sister's son to me ;
 And when I lay in dungeon dark,
 Of Naworth Castle, long months three,
 Till ransom'd for a thousand mark,
 Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.
 And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,
 And thou wert now alive as I,
 No mortal man should us divide,
 Till one, or both of us did die :
 Yet rest thee God ! for well I know
 I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
 In all the northern counties here,
 Whose word is Snaffle, spur, and spear,
 Thou wert the best to follow gear !
 'Twas pleasure, as we look'd behind,
 To see how thou the chase could'st wind,
 Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way,
 And with the bugle rouse the fray
 I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
 Dark Musgrave were alive again."

L

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XXX.

wn ;

So mourn'd he, till Lord Dacre's band
Were bowning back to Cumberland.
They raised brave Musgrave from the field,
And laid him on his bloody shield ;
On levell'd lances, four and four,
By turns the noble burden bore.
Before, at times, upon the gale,
Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive wail ;
Behind, four priests, in sable stole,
Sung requiem for the warrior's soul :
Around, the horsemen slowly rode ;
With trailing pikes the spearmen trode ;
And thus the gallant knight they bore,
Through Liddesdale to Leven's shore ;
Thence to Holme Coltrame's lofty nave,
And laid him in his father's grave.

THE harp's wild notes, though hush'd the song,
The mimic march of death prolong ;
Now seems it far, and now a-near,
Now meets, and now eludes the ear ;
Now seems some mountain-side to sweep,
Now faintly dies in valley deep ;
Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,
Now the sad requiem loads the gale ;
Last, o'er the warrior's closing grave,
Kung the full choir in choral stave.

After due pause, they bade him tell,
Why he, who touch'd the harp so well,
Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,
Wander a poor and thankless soil,

When the more generous Southern Land
Would well requite his skilful hand.

The Aged Harper, howsoe'er
His only friend, his harp, was dear,
Liked not to hear it rank'd so high
Above his flowing poesy :
Less liked he still, that scornful jeer
Misprised the land he loved so dear ;
High was the sound, as thus again
The Bard resumed his minstrel strain.

CANTO SIXTH.

L

BREATHES there a man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land !
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd,
From wandering on a foreign strand !
If such there breathe, go, mark him well ;
For him no Minstrel raptures swell :
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim ;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung.

II.

O Caledonia ! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child !
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires ! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band
That knits me to thy rugged strand !
Still, as I view each well-known scene,
Think what is now, and what hath been,
Seems as, to me, of all bereft,
Sole friends thy woods and streams were left ;
And thus I love them better still,
Even in extremity of ill.
By Yarrow's streams still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way ;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my wither'd cheek ;
Still lay my head by Teviot Stone,
Though there, forgotten and alone,
The Bard may draw his parting groan.

III.

Not scorn'd like me ! to Branksome Hall
The Minstrels came, at festive call ;
Trooping they came, from near and far,
The jovial priests of mirth and war ;
Alike for feast and fight prepared,
Battle and banquet both they shared.
Of late before each martial clan,
They blew their death-note in the van,
But now, for every merry mate,
Rose the portcullis' iron grate ;

L-L

They sound the pipe they strike the string,
 They dance, they revel, and they sing,
 Till the rude turrets shake and ring,

IV.

Me lists not at this tide declare
 The splendour of the spousal rite,
 How muster'd in the chapel fair
 Both maid and matron, squire and knight ;
 Me lists not tell of owches rare,
 Of mantles green, and braided hair,
 And kirtles furr'd with miniver ;
 What plumage waved the altar round,
 How spurs and ringing chainlets sound ;
 And hard it were for bard to speak
 The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek ;
 That lovely hue which comes and flies,
 As awe and shame alternate rise !

V.

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
 Chapel or altar came not nigh ;
 Nor durst the rights of spousal grace,
 So much she fear'd each holy place.
 False slanders these :—I trust right well
 She wrought not by forbidden spell ;
 For mighty words and signs have power
 O'er sprites in planetary hour :
 Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,
 Who tamper with such dangerous art.
 But this for faithful truth I say,
 The Ladye by the altar stood,

Of sable velvet her array,
And on her head a crimson hood,
With pearls embroider'd and entwined,
Guarded with gold, with ermine lined ;
A merlin sat upon her wrist
Held by a leash of silken twist.

VI.

The spousal rites were ended soon :
'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival.
Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
Marshall'd the rank of every guest ;
Pages, with ready blade, were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share :
O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,
And princely peacock's gilded train,
And o'er the boar-head, garnish'd brave,
And cygnet from St. Mary's wave ;
O'er ptarmigan and venison,
The priest had spoke his benison.
Then rose the riot and the din,
Above, beneath, without, within !
For, from the lofty balcony,
Rung trumpet, shalm, and psaltery :
Their clanging bowls old warriors quaff'd,
Loudly they spoke, and loudly laugh'd ;
Whisper'd young knights, in tone more mild,
To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.
The hooded hawks, high-perch'd on beam,
The clamour join'd with whistling scream,
And flapp'd their wings, and shook their bells,

In concert with the staghound's yells,
 Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
 From Bourdeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine ;
 Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
 And all is mirth and revelry.

VII.

The Goblin Page, omitting still
 No opportunity of ill,
 Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
 To rouse debate and jealousy ;
 Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,
 By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
 And now in humour highly cross'd
 About some steeds his band had lost,
 High words to words succeeding still,
 Smote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill ;
 A hot and hardy Rutherford,
 Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-Sword.
 He took it on the page's saye,
 Hunthill had driven these steeds away.
 Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
 The kindling discord to compose :
 Stern Rutherford right little said,
 But bit his glove, and shook his head. —
 A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
 Stout Conrad, cold, and drench'd in blood,
 His bosom gored with many a wound,
 Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found ;
 Unknown the manner of his death,
 Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath ;
 But ever from that time, 'twas said,
 That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

VIII.

The dwarf, who fear'd his master's eye
Might his foul treachery espie,
Now sought the castle buttery,
Where many a yeoman, bold and free,
Revell'd as merrily and well
As those that sat in lordly selle.
Watt Tinlinn, there, did frankly raise
The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes ;
And he, as by his breeding bound,
To Howard's merry-men sent it round.
To quit them, on the English side,
Red Roland Forster loudly cried,
"A deep carouse to yon fair bride !"—
At every pledge, from vat and pail,
Foam'd forth in floods the nut-brown ale ;
While shout the riders every one :
Such day of mirth ne'er cheer'd their clan,
Since old Buccleuch the name did gain,
When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en.

IX.

The wily page, with vengeful thought,
Remember'd him of Tinlinn's yew,
And swore, it should be dearly bought
That ever he the arrow drew.
First, he the yeoman did molest,
With bitter gibe and taunting jest ;
Told, how he fled at Solway strife,
And how Hob Armstrong cheer'd his wife ;
Then, shunning still his powerful arm,
At unawares he wrought him harm ;

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From trencher stole his choicest cheer,
 Dash'd from his lips his can of beer ;
 Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
 With bodkin pierced him to the bone :
 The venom'd wound, and festering joint,
 Long after rued that bodkin's point.
 The startled yeoman swore and spurn'd,
 And board and flagons overturn'd.
 Riot and clamour wild began ;
 Back to the hall the Urchin ran ;
 Took in a darkling nook his post,
 And grinn'd, and mutter'd, " Lost ! lost !

X.

By this, the Dame, lest farther fray
 Should mar the concord of the day,
 Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay.
 And first stept forth old Albert Græme,
 The Minstrel of that ancient name :
 Was none who struck the harp so well
 Within the Land Debateable.
 Well friended, too, his hardy kin,
 Whoever lost, were sure to win ;
 They sought the beeves that made their broth
 In Scotland and in England both.
 In homely guise, as nature bade,
 His simple song the Borderer said.

XI.

ALBERT GRÆME.

It was an English ladye bright,
 (The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
 And she would marry a Scottish knight,
 For love will still be lord of all.

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Blithely they saw the rising sun,
When he shone fair on Carlisle wall ;
But they were sad ere day was done,
Though Love was still the lord of all.

Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall ;
Her brother gave but a flask of wine,
For ire that Love was lord of all.

For she had lands, both meadow and lea,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall ;
And he swore her death, ere he would see
A Scottish knight the lord of all !

XII.

That wine she had not tasted well,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
When dead, in her true love's arm, she fell,
For Love was still the lord of all !

He pierced her brother to the heart,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall :
So perish all would true love part,
That Love may still be lord of all !

And then he took the cross divine,
(Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
And died for her sake in Palestine,
So Love was still the lord of all.

Now all ye lovers, that faithful prove,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
Pray for the souls who died for love,
For Love shall still be lord of all !

XIII.

As ended Albert's simple lay,
 Arose a bard of loftier port ;
 For sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay,
 Renown'd in haughty Henry's court :
 There rung thy harp, unrivall'd long,
 Fitztraver of the silver song !
 The gentle Surrey loved his lyre—
 Who has not heard of Surrey's fame ?
 His was the hero's soul of fire,
 And his the bard's immortal name,
 And his was love, exalted high
 By all the glow of chivalry.

XIV.

They sought, together, climes afar,
 And oft, within some olive grove,
 When even came with twinkling star,
 They sung of Surrey's absent love.
 His step the Italian peasant stay'd,
 And deem'd, that spirits from on high,
 Round where some hermit saint was laid,
 Were breathing heavenly melody ;
 So sweet did harp and voice combine,
 To praise the name of Geraldine.

XV.

Fitztraver ! O what tongue may say
 The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,
 When Surrey, of the deathless lay,
 Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew !
 Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
 His harp call'd wrath and vengeance down.

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He left, for Naworth's iron towers,
Windsor's green glades, and courtly bowers,
And faithful to his patron's name,
With Howard still Fitztraver came ;
Lord William's foremost favourite he,
And chief of all his minstrelsy.

XVI.

FITZTRAVER.

'Twas All-souls' eve, and Surrey's heart beat high ;
He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,
Which told the mystic hour approaching nigh,
When wise Cornelius promised, by his art,
To show to him the ladye of his heart,
Albeit betwixt them roar'd the ocean grim ;
Yet so the sage had hight to play his part,
That he should see her form in life and limb,
And mark, if still she loved him, and still she
thought of him.

XVII.

Dark was the vaulted room of gramayre,
To which the wizard led the gallant Knight,
Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
A hallow'd taper shed a glimmering light
Of mystic implements of magic might ;
On cross, and character, and talisman,
And almagest, and altar, nothing bright :
For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
As watchlight by the bed of some departing man.

XVIII.

But soon, within that mirror huge and high,
Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam ;

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And forms upon its breast the Earl 'gan spy,
Cloudy and indistinct, as feverish dream,
Till, slow arranging, and defined, they seem
To form a lordly and a lofty room,
Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,
And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid
in gloom.

XIX.

Fair all the pageant—but how passing fair
The slender form, which lay on couch of Ind !
O'er her white bosom stray'd her hazel hair,
Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined ;
All in her night-robe loose she lay reclined,
And, pensive, read from tablet eburnine,
Some strain that seem'd her inmost soul to find—
That favour'd strain was Surrey's raptured line,
That fair and lovely form, the Lady Geraldine !

XX.

Slow roll'd the clouds upon the lovely form,
And swept the godly vision all away—
So royal envy roll'd the murky storm
O'er my beloved Master's glorious day.
Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant ! Heaven repay
On thee, and on thy children's latest line,
The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,
The gory bridal bed, the plunder'd shrine,
The murder'd Surrey's blood, the tears of
Geraldine !

XXI.

Both Scots and Southern chiefs prolong
Applauses of Fitztraver's song ;

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL. 171

These hated Henry's name as death,
And those still held the ancient faith.—
Then, from his seat, with lofty air,
Rose Harold, bard of brave St. Clair;
St. Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
Had with that lord to battle come.
Harold was born where restless seas
Howl round the storm-swept Orcades;
Where erst St. Clairs held princely sway
O'er isle and islet, strait and bay;—
Still nods their palace to its fall,
Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall!—
Thence oft he mark'd fierce Pentland rave,
As if grim Odin rode her wave;
And watch'd, the whilst, with visage pale
And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;
For all of wonderful and wild
Had rapture for the lonely child.

XXII.

And much of wild and wonderful
In these rude isles might fancy cull;
For thither came, in times afar,
Stern Lochlin's sons of roving war,
The Norsemen, train'd to spoil and blood,
Skill'd to prepare the raven's food;
Kings of the main their leaders brave,
Their barks the dragons of the wave.
And there, in many a stormy vale,
The Scald had told his wondrous tale;
And many a Runic column high
Had witness'd grim idolatry,
And thus had Harold, in his youth,
Learn'd many a Saga's rhyme uncouth—

Of that Sea-Snake tremendous curl'd,
 Whose monstrous circle girds the world ;
 Of those dread Maids whose hideous yell
 Maddens the battle's bloody swell ;
 Of Chiefs, who, guided through the gloom
 By the pale death-lights of the tomb,
 Ransack'd the graves of warriors old,
 Their falchions wrench'd from corpses' hold,
 Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,
 And bade the dead arise to arms !
 With war and wonder all on flame,
 To Roslin's bowers young Harold came,
 Where, by sweet glen and greenwood tree,
 He learn'd a milder minstrelsy ;
 Yet something of the Northern spell
 Mix'd with the softer numbers well.

XXIII.

HAROLD.

O listen, listen, ladies gay !
 No haughty feat of arms I tell ;
 Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
 That mourns the lovely Rosabelle :

—“ Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew !
 And, gentle ladye, deign to stay,
 Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
 Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

“ The blackening wave is edged with white :
 To inch and rock the sea-mews fly ;
 The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,
 Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.

"Last night the gifted Seer did view
A white shroud swathed round ladye gay ;
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch :
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day ?"

"'Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my ladye-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

"'Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide,
If 'tis not fill'd by Rosabelle."—

O'er Roslin all that dreary night
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam ;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
And redder than the bright moon-beam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen,
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seem'd all on fire, within, around,
Deep sacristy and altar's pale,
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail.

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Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high St. Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle ;
Each one the holy vault doth hold—
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle !

And each St. Clair was buried there,
With candle, with book, and with knell ;
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung,
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

XXIV.

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
Scarce mark'd the guests the darken'd hall,
Though, long before the sinking day,
A wondrous shade involved them all :
It was not eddying mist or fog,
Drain'd by the sun from fen or bog ;
Of no eclipse had sages told ;
And yet, as it came on apace,
Each one could scarce his neighbour's face,
Could scarce his own stretch'd hand behold.
A secret horror check'd the feast ;
And chill'd the soul of every guest ;
Even the high Dame stood half aghast,
She knew some evil on the blast,
The elfish page fell to the ground,
And, shuddering, muttered, " Found ! found !
found ! "

XXV.

Then sudden, through the darken'd air,
A flash of lightning came ;
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
The castle seem'd on flame,
Glanced every rafter of the hall,
Glanced every shield upon the wall ;
Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,
Were instant seen, and instant gone.
Full through the guests' bedazzled band
Resistless flash'd the levin-brand,
And fill'd the hall with smouldering smoke,
As on the elfish page it broke.

It broke, with thunder long and loud,
Dismay'd the brave, appall'd the proud,—
From sea to sea the 'larum rung ;
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
To arms the startled warders sprung :
When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elvish dwarf was seen no more.

XXVI.

Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,
Some saw a sight not seen by all ;
That dreadful voice was heard by some,
Cry, with loud summons, "GYLBIN, COME !"
And on the spot where burst the brand,
Just where the page had flung him down,
Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
And some the waving of a gown.
The guests in silence pray'd and shook,
And terror dimm'd each lofty look.

But none of all the astonish'd train
 Was so dismay'd as Deloraine ;
 His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
 'Twas fear'd his mind would ne'er return ;
 For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
 Like him of whom the story ran,
 Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man.
 At length, by fits, he darkly told,
 With broken hint, and shuddering cold—
 That he had seen, right certainly,
A shape with amice wrapp'd around,
With a wrought Spanish baldrick bound,
Like pilgrim from beyond the sea ;
 And knew—but how it matter'd not—
 It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

XXVII.

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
 All trembling heard the wondrous tale ;
 No sound was made, no word was spoke,
 Till noble Angus silence broke ;
 And he a solemn sacred plight
 Did to St. Bride of Douglas make,
 That he a pilgrimage would take
 To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
 Of Michael's restless sprite.
 Then each, to ease his troubled breast,
 To some bless'd saint his prayers address'd :
 Some to St. Modan made their vows,
 Some to St. Mary of the Lowes,
 Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,
 Some to our Ladye of the Isle ;

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL. 177

Each did his patron witness make,
That he such pilgrimage would take,
And monks should sing, and bells should toll,
All for the weal of Michael's soul.
While vows were ta'en, and prayers were pray'd,
'Tis said the noble dame, dismay'd,
Renounced for aye dark magic's aid.

XXVIII.

Nought of the bridal will I tell,
Which after in short space befell ;
Nor how brave sons and daughters fair
Bless'd Teviot's Flower and Cranstoun's heir :
After such dreadful scene, 'twere vain
To wake the note of mirth again.
More meet it were to mark the day
Of penitence and prayer divine,
When pilgrim chiefs, in sad array,
Sought Melrose' holy shrine.

XXIX.

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
And arms enfolded on his breast,
Did every pilgrim go ;
The standers-by might hear uneath,
Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath,
Through all the lengthen'd row :
No lordly look, nor martial stride,
Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
Forgotten their renown ;
Silent and slow, like ghosts, they glide
To the high altar's hallow'd side,
And there they knelt them down :

M-M

Above the suppliant chieftains wave
 The banners of departed brave ;
 Beneath the letter'd stones were laid
 The ashes of their fathers dead ;
 From many a garnish'd niche around,
 Stern saints and tortured martyrs frown'd.

XXX

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
 With sable cowl and scapular,
 And snow-white stoles, in order due,
 The holy Fathers, two and two,
 In long procession came ;
 Taper, and host, and book they bare,
 And holy banner, flourish'd fair
 With the Redeemer's name.
 Above the prostrate pilgrim band
 The mitred Abbot stretch'd his hand,
 And bless'd them as they kneel'd ;
 With holy cross he sign'd them all,
 And pray'd thy might be sage in hall,
 And fortunate in field.
 Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
 And solemn requiem for the dead ;
 And bells toll'd out their mighty peal,
 For the departed spirit's weal ;
 And ever in the office close
 The hymn of intercession rose ;
 And far the echoing aisles prolong
 The awful burthen of the song—
 DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
 SOLVENT SECLUM IN FAVILLA ;

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL. 179

While the pealing organ rung.
Were it meet with sacred strain
To close my lay, so light and vain,
Thus the holy Fathers sung :—

XXXI.

HYMN FOR THE DEAD.

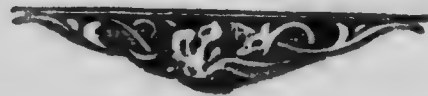
That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away.
What power shall be the sinner's stay ?
How shall he meet that dreadful day ?

When, shrivelling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll ;
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead.

Oh ! on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be THOU the trembling sinner's stay.
Though heaven and earth shall pass away.

HUSH'D is the harp—the Minstrel gone.
And did he wander forth alone ?
Alone, in indigence and age,
To linger out his pilgrimage ?
No ; close beneath proud Newark's tower,
Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower ;
A simple hut ; but there was seen
The little garden hedged with green,
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.

There shelter'd wanderers, by the blaze,
Oft heard the tales of other days ;
For much he loved to ope his door,
And give the aid he begg'd before.
So pass'd the winter's day ; but still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve with balmy breath,
Waved the blue-bells on Newark heath ;
When throistles sung in Harehead-shaw,
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourish'd, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged Harper's soul awoke !
Then would he sing achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay.
Forgetful of the closing day ;
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer ;
And Yarrow, as he roll'd along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.





MARMION:
A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD.

IN SIX CANTOS.

Alas! that Scottish maid should sing
The combat where her lover fell!
That Scottish Bard should wake the string,
The triumphs of our foes to tell!

—LEYDEN.

THE present story turns upon the private adventures of a fictitious character; but is called a Tale of Flodden Field, because the hero's fate is connected with that memorable defeat, and the causes which led to it. The design of the Author was, if possible, to apprise his readers, at the outset, of the date of his Story, and to prepare them for the manners of the Age in which it is laid. Any Historical Narrative, far more an attempt at Epic composition, exceeded his plan of a Romantic tale; yet he may be permitted to hope, from the popularity of *THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL*, that an attempt to paint the manners of the feudal times, upon a broader scale, and in the course of a more interesting story, will not be unacceptable to the Public.

The Poem opens about the commencement of August, and concludes with the defeat of Flodden, 9th September 1513.

ASHESTIEL, 1808.

CANTO FIRST.

THE CASTLE.

I.

DAY set on Norham's castled steep,
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,
And Cheviot's mountains lone :
The battled towers, the donjon keep,
The loophole grates, where captives weep,
The flanking walls that round it sweep,
In yellow lustre shone.
The warriors on the turrets high,
Moving athwart the evening sky,
Seem'd forms of giant height :
Their armour, as it caught the rays,
Flash'd back again the western blaze,
In lines of dazzling light.

II.

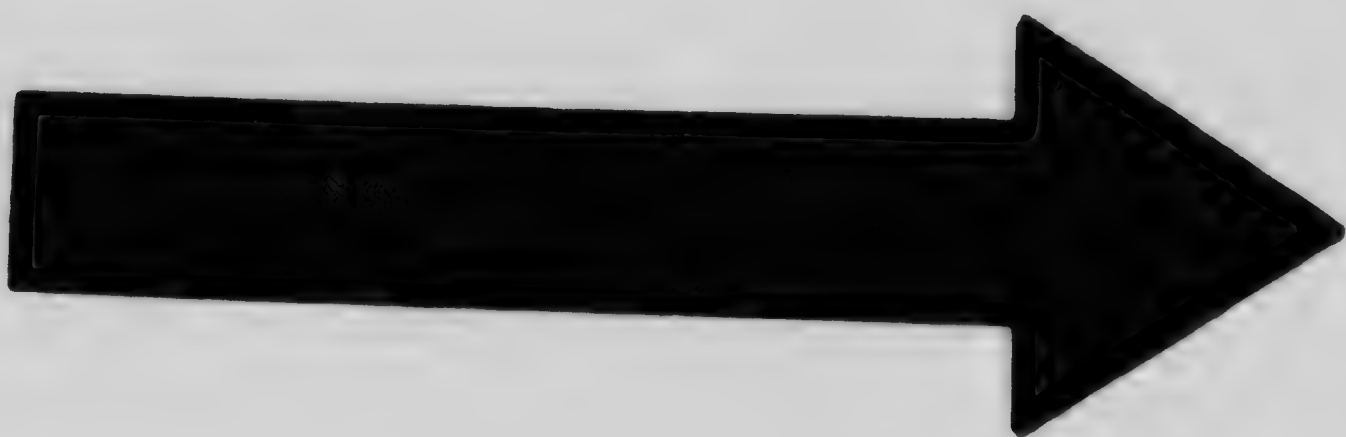
Saint George's banner, broad and gay,
Now faded, as the fading ray
Less bright, and less, was flung ;
The evening gale had scarce the power
To wave it on the Donjon Tower,
So heavily it hung.
The scouts had parted on their search,
The Castle gates were barr'd ;
Above the gloomy portal arch,
Timing his footsteps to a march,
The Warder kept his guard ;
Low humming, as he paced along,
Some ancient Border gathering song.

III.

A distant trampling sound he hears ;
He looks abroad, and soon appears,
O'er Horncliff-hill a plump of spears,
Beneath a pennon gay ;
A horseman, darting from the crowd,
Like lightning from a summer cloud,
Spurs on his mettled courser proud,
Before the dark array.
Beneath the sable palisade,
That closed the Castle barricade,
His bugle-horn he blew ;
The warder hasted from the wall,
And warn'd the Captain in the hall,
For well the blast he knew ;
And joyfully that knight did call
To sewer, squire, and senechal.

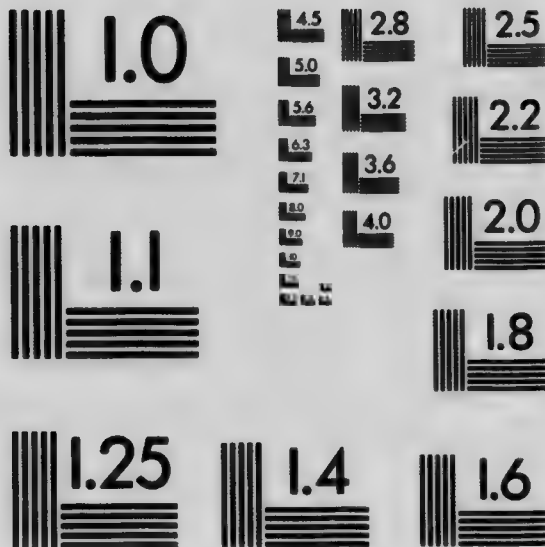
IV.

" Now broach ye a pipe of Malvoisie,
Bring pasties of the doe,
And quickly make the entrance free,
And bid my heralds ready be,
And every minstrel sound his glee,
And all our trumpets blow ;
And, from the platform, spare ye not
To fire a noble salvo-shot ;
Lord MARMION waits below ! "
Then to the Castle's lower ward
Sped forty yeomen tall,
The iron-studded gates unbarr'd,
Raised the portcullis' ponderous guard,
The lofty palisade unsparr'd
And let the drawbridge fall.



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V.

Along the bridge Lord Marmion rode,
Proudly his red-roan charger trode,
His helm hung at the saddlebow ;
Well by his visage you might know
He was a stalworth knight, and keen,
And had in many a battle been ;
The scar on his brown cheek reveal'd
A token true of Bosworth field ;
His eyebrow dark, and eye of fire,
Show'd spirit proud, and prompt to ire ;
Yet lines of thought upon his cheek
Did deep design and counsel speak.
His forehead, by his casque worn bare,
His thick moustache, and curly hair,
Coal-black, and grizzled here and there,
But more through toil than age ;
His square-turn'd joints, and strength of limb,
Show'd him no carpet knight so trim,
But in close fight a champion grim,
In camps a leader sage.

VI.

Well was he arm'd from head to heel,
In mail and plate of Milan steel ;
But his strong helm, of mighty cost,
Was all with burnish'd gold emboss'd :
Amid the plumage of the crest
A falcon hover'd on her nest,
With wings outspread, and forward breast ;
E'en such a falcon, on his shield,
Soar'd sable in an azure field :

The golden legend bore aright,
~~Who checks at me, to death is dight.~~
Blue was the charger's broider'd rein ;
Blue ribbons deck'd his arching mane ;
The knightly housing's ample fold
Was velvet blue, and trapp'd with gold.

VII.

Behind him rode two gallant squires,
Of noble name, and knightly sires ;
They burn'd the gilded spurs to claim ;
For well could each a war-horse tame,
Could draw the bow, the sword could sway,
And lightly bear the ring away ;
Nor less with courteous precepts stored,
Could dance in hall, and carve at board,
And frame love-ditties passing rare,
And sing them to a lady-fair.

VIII.

Four men-at arms came at their backs,
With halbert, bill, and battle-axe ;
They bore Lord Marmion's lance so strong,
And led his sumpter-mules along,
And ambling palfrey, when at need
Him listed ease his battle-steed.
The last and trustiest of the four,
On high his forky pennon bore ;
Like swallow's tail, in shape and hue,
Flutter'd the streamer glossy blue,
Where, blazon'd sable, as before,
The towering falcon seem'd to soar.
Last, twenty yeomen, two and two,
In hosen black, and jerkins blue,

With falcons broider'd on each breast,
Attended on their lord's behest.
Each, chosen for an archer good,
Knew hunting-craft by lake or wood ;
Each one a six-foot bow could bend,
And far a cloth-yard shaft could send ;
Each held a boar-spear tough and strong,
And at their belts their quivers rung.
Their dusty palfreys, and array,
Show'd they had march'd a weary way.

IX.

'Tis meet that I should tell you now,
How fairly arm'd, and order'd how,
The soldiers of the guard,
With musket, pike, and morion,
To welcome noble Marmion,
Stood in the Castle ward ;
Minstrels and trumpeters were there,
The gunner held his linstock yare,
For welcome-shot prepared :
Enter'd the train, and such a clang,
As then through all his turrets rang,
Old Norham never heard.

X.

The guards their morrice-pikes advanced,
The trumpets flourish'd brave,
The cannon from the ramparts glanced,
And thundering welcome gave.
A blithe salute, in martial sort,
The minstrels well might sound,
For, as Lord Marmion cross'd the court,
He scatter'd angels round.

" Welcome to Norham, Marmion !
Stout heart, and open hand !
Well dost thou brook thy gallant roan,
Thou flower of English land ! "

XI.

Two pursuivants, whom tabarts deck,
With silver scutcheon round their neck,
Stood on the steps of stone,
By which you reach the donjon gate,
And there, with herald pomp and state,
They hail'd Lord Marmion :
They hail'd him Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye,
Of Tamworth tower and town ;
And he, their courtesy to requite,
Gave them a chain of twelve marks' weight,
All as he lighted down.
" Now, largesse, largesse, Lord Marmion,
Knight of the crest of gold !
A blazon'd shield, in battle won,
Ne'er guarded heart so bold. "

XII.

They marshall'd him to the Castle-hall,
Where the guests stood all aside,
And loudly flourish'd the trumpet-call,
And the heralds loudly cried,
—" Room, lordings, room for Lord Marmion,
With the crest and helm of gold !
Full well we know the trophies won
In the lists of Cottiswold :
There, vainly Ralph de Wilton strove
'Gainst Marmion's force to stand ;

To him he lost his lady-love,
 And to the King his land.
 Ourselves beheld the listed field,
 A sight both sad and fair ;
 We saw Lord Marmion pierce his shield,
 And saw his saddle bare :
 We saw the victor win the crest
 He wears with worthy pride ;
 And on the gibbet-tree, reversed,
 His foeman's scutcheon tied.
 Place, nobles, for the Falcon-Knight !
 Room, room, ye gentles gay,
 For him who conquer'd in the right,
 Marmion of Fontenaye !"

XIII.

Then stepp'd to meet that noble Lord,
 Sir Hugh the Heron bold,
 Baron of Twisell, and of Ford,
 And Captain of the Hold.
 He led Lord Marmion to the dais,
 Raised o'er the pavement high,
 And placed him in the upper place—
 They feasted full and high :
 The whiles a Northern harper rude
 Chanted a rhyme of deadly feud,
*"How the fierce Thirwalls, and Ridleys all,
 Stout Willimondswick,
 And Hardriding Dick,
 And Hughie of Hawdon, and Will o' the Wall,
 Have set on Sir Albany Featherstonhaugh,
 And taken his life at the Deadman's-shaw."*
 Scantly Lord Marmion's ear could brook
 The harper's barbarous lay ;

Yet much he praised the pains he took,
And well those pains did pay :
For lady's suit, and minstrel's strain,
By knight should ne'er be heard in vain.

XIV.

"Now, good Lord Marmion," Heron says,
"Of your fair courtesy,
I pray you bide some little space
In this poor tower with me.
Here may you keep your arms from rust,
May breathe your war-horse well ;
Seldom hath pass'd a week but giust
Or feat of arms befell :
The Scots can rein a mettled steed ;
And love to couch a spear—
Saint George ! a stirring life they lead,
That have such neighbours near.
Then stay with us a little space,
Our northern wars to learn ;
I pray you, for your lady's grace !"
Lord Marmion's brow grew stern.

XV.

The Captain mark'd his alter'd look,
And gave a squire the sign ;
A mighty wassail-bowl he took,
And crown'd it high in wine.
"Now pledge me here, Lord Marmion :
But first I pray thee fair,
Where hast thou left that page of thine,
That used to serve thy cup of wine,
Whose beauty was so rare ?

When last in Raby towers we met,
The boy I closely eyed,
And often mark'd his cheeks were wet
With tears he fain would hide :
His was no rugged horse-boy's hand,
To burnish shield or sharpen brand,
Or saddle battle-steed ;
But meeter seem'd for lady fair,
To fan her cheek, or curl her hair,
Or through embroidery, rich and rare,
The slender silk to lead ;
His skin was fair, his ringlets gold,
His bosom—when he sigh'd,
The russet doublet's rugged fold
Could scarce repel its pride !
Say, hast thou given that lovely youth
To serve in lady's bower ?
Or was the gentle page, in sooth,
A gentle paramour ? ”

XVI.

Lord Marmion ill could brook such jest ;
He roll'd his kindling eye,
With pain his rising wrath suppress'd,
Yet made a calm reply :
“ That boy thou thought'st so goodly fair,
He might not brook the northern air ;
More of his fate if thou wouldst learn,
I left him sick in Lindisfarne :
Enough of him—But, Heron, say.
Why does thy lovely lady gay
Disdain to grace the hall to-day ?
Or has that dame, so fair and sage,
Gone on some pious pilgrimage ? ”—

He spoke in covert scorn, for fame
Whisper'd light tales of Heron's dame.

XVII.

Unmark'd, at least unreck'd, the taunt ;
Careless the Knight replied—
" No bird, whose feathers gaily flaunt,
Delights in cage to bide :
Norham is grim and grated close,
Hemm'd in by battlement and fosse,
And many a darksome tower ;
And better loves my lady bright
To sit in liberty and light,
In fair Queen Margaret's bower.
We hold our greyhound in our hand,
Our falcon on our glove ;
But where shall we find leash or band
For dame that loves to rove ?
Let the wild falcon soar her swing,
She'll stoop when she has tired her wing."

XVIII.

" Nay, if with Royal James's bride
The lovely Lady Heron bide,
Behold me here a messenger,
Your tender greetings prompt to bear ;
For, to the Scottish court address'd,
I journey at our King's behest,
And pray you, of your grace, provide
For me, and mine, a trusty guide.
I have not ridden in Scotland since
James back'd the cause of that mock prince
Warbeck, that Flemish counterfeit,
Who on the gibbet paid the cheat.

Then did I march with Surrey's power,
What time we razed old Ayton tower."

XIX.

"For such-like need, my lord, I trow,
Norham can find you guides enow ;
For here be some have prick'd as far,
On Scottish ground, as to Dunbar ;
Have drunk the monks of St Bothan's ale,
And driven the beeves of Lauderdale ;
Harried the wives of Greenlaw's goods,
And given them light to set their hoods."

XX.

"Now, in good sooth," Lord Marmion cried,
"Were I in warlike wise to ride,
A better guard I would not lack
Then your stout forayers at my back ;
But, as in form of peace I go,
A friendly messenger, to know,
Why through all Scotland, near and far,
Their King is mustering troops for war,
The sight of plundering border spears
Might justify suspicious fears,
And deadly feud, or thirst of spoil,
Break out in some unseemly broil :
A herald were my fitting guide ;
Or friar, sworn in peace to bide ;
Or pardoner, or travelling priest,
Or strolling pilgrim, at the least."

XXI.

The Captain mused a little space,
And pass'd his hand across his face.

—“ Fain would I find the guide you want,
 But ill may spare a pursuivant,
 The onl^y men that safe can ride
 Mine errands on the Scottish side :
 And though a bishop built this fort,
 Few holy brethren here resort ;
 Even our good chaplain, as I ween,
 Since our last siege, we have not seen :
 The mass he might not sing or say,
 Upon one stinted meal a-day ;
 So, safe he sat in Durham aisle,
 And pray'd for our success the while.
 Our Norham vicar, woe betide,
 Is all too well in case to ride ;
 The priest of Shoreswood—he could rein
 The wildest war-horse in your train ;
 But then, no spearman in the hall
 Will sooner swear, or stab, or brawl.
 Friar John of Tillmouth were the man ;
 A blithesome brother at the can,
 A welcome guest in hall and bower,
 He knows each castle, town, and tower,
 In which the wine and ale is good,
 Twixt Newcastle and Holy-Rood.
 But that good man, as ill befalls,
 Hath seldom left our castle walls,
 Since, on the vigil of St. Bede,
 In evil hour, he cross'd the Tweed,
 To teach Dame Alison her creed.
 Old Bughtrig found him with his wife ;
 And John, an enemy to strife,
 Sans frock and hood, fled for his life.
 The jealous churl hath deeply swore,
 That, if again he venture o'er,

N-N

He shall shrieve penitent no more.
Little he loves such risks, I know ;
Yet, in your guard, perchance will go."

XXII.

Young Selby, at the fair hall-board,
Carved to his uncle and that lord,
And reverently took up the word.
" Kind uncle, woe were we each one,
If harm should hap to brother John.
He is a man of mirthful speech,
Can many a game and gambol teach ;
Full well at tables can he play,
And sweep at bowls the stake away.
Nor can a lustier carol bawl,
The needfullest among us all,
When time hangs heavy in the hall,
And snow comes thick at Christmas tide,
And we can neither hunt, nor ride
A foray on the Scottish side.
The vow'd revenge of Bughtrig rude
May end in worse than loss of hood.
Let Friar John, in safety, still
In chimney-corner snore his fill,
Roast hissing crabs, or flagons swill
Last night, to Norham there came one
Will better guide Lord Marmion."—
" Nephew," quoth Heron, " by my fay,
Well hast thou spoke ; say forth thy say."

XXIII.

" Here is a holy Palmer come,
From Salem first, and last from Rome ;

One, that hath kiss'd the blessed tomb,
 And visited each holy shrine
 In Araby and Palestine ;
 On hills of Armenie hath been,
 Where Noah's ark may yet be seen ;
 By that Red Sea, too, hath he trod,
 Which parted at the prophet's rod ;
 In Sinai's wilderness he saw
 The Mount, where Israel heard the law,
 'Mid thunder-dint, and flashing levin,
 And shadows, mists, and darkness, given.
 He shows Saint James's cockle-shell,
 Of fair Montserrat, too, can tell ;
 And of that Grot where Olives nod,
 Where, darling of each heart and eye,
 From all the youth of Sicily,
 Saint Rosalie retired to God.

XXIV.

"To stout Saint George of Norwi merry,
 Saint Thomas, too, of Canterbury,
 Cuthbert of Durham and Saint Bede,
 For his sins' pardon hath he pray'd.
 He knows the passes of the North,
 And seeks far shrines beyond the Forth ;
 Little he eats, and long will wake,
 And drinks but of the stream or lake.
 This were a guide o'er moor and dale ;
 But, when our John hath quaff'd his ale,
 As little as the wind that blows,
 And warms itself against his nose,
 Kens he, or cares, which way he goes."—

XXV.

"Gramercy!" quoth Lord Marmion,
"Full loth were I, that Friar John,
That venerable man, for me,
Were placed in fear or jeopardy.
If this same Palmer will me lead
From hence to Holy-Rood,
Like his good saint, I'll pay his meed,
Instead of cockle-shell, or bead,
With angels fair and good.
I love such holy rambles; still
They know to charm a weary hill,
With song, romance, or lay:
Some jovial tale, or glee, or jest,
Some lying legend, at the least,
They bring to cheer the way."—

XXVI.

"Ah! noble sir," young Selby said,
And finger on his lip he laid,
"This man knows much, perchance e'en more
Than he could learn by holy lore.
Still to himself he's muttering,
And shrinks as at some unseen thing.
Last night we listen'd at his cell;
Strange sounds we heard, and, sooth to tell,
He murmur'd on till morn, howe'er
No living mortal could be near.
Sometimes I thought I heard it plain,
As other voices spoke again.
I cannot tell—I like it not—
Friar John hath told us it is wrote,

No conscience clear, and void of wrong,
Can rest awake, and pray so long.
Himself still sleeps before his beads
Have marked ten aves, and two creeds."

XXVII.

—"Let pass," quoth Marmion; "by my fay,
This man shall guide me on my way,
Although the great arch-fiend and he
Had sworn themselves of company.
So please you, gentle youth, to call
This Palmer to the Castle-hall."
The summon'd Palmer came in place;
His sable cowl o'erhung his face;
In his black mantle was he clad,
With Peter's keys, in cloth of red,
On his broad shoulders wrought;
The scallop shell his cap did deck;
The crucifix around his neck
Was from Loretto brought;
His sandals were with travel tore,
Staff, budget, bottle, scrip, he wore;
The faded palm-branch in his hand
Show'd pilgrim from the Holy Land.

XXVIII.

When as the Palmer came in hall,
No lord, nor knight, was there more tall,
Nor had a statelier step withal,
Or look'd more high and keen;
For no saluting did he wait,
But strode across the hall of state,
And fronted Marmion where he sate,
As he his peer had been.

But his gaunt frame was worn with toil ;
His cheek was sunk, alas the while !
And when he struggled at a smile,
His eye look'd haggard wild :
Poor wretch ! the mother that him bare,
If she had been in presence there,
In his wan face, and sun-burn'd hair,
She had not known her child.
Danger, long travel, want, or woe,
Soon change the form that best we know—
For deadly fear can time outgo,
And blanch at once the hair ;
Hard toil can roughen form and face,
And want can quench the eye's bright grace,
Nor does old age a wrinkle trace
More deeply than despair.
Happy whom none of these befall,
But this poor Palmer knew them all.

XXIX.

Lord Marmion then his boon did ask ;
The Palmer took on him the task,
So he would march with morning tide,
To Scottish court to be his guide.
" But I have solemn vows to pay,
And may not linger by the way,
To fair St. Andrews bound,
Within the ocean-cave to pray,
Where good Saint Rule his holy lay
From midnight to the dawn of day,
Sung to the billows' sound ;
Thence to Saint Fillan's blessed well,
Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,
And the crazed brain restore :

Saint Mary grant, that cave or spring
Could back to peace my bosom bring,
Or bid it throb no more ! ”

XXX.

And now the midnight draught of sleep,
Where wine and spices richly steep,
In massive bowl of silver deep,
The page presents on knee.
Lord Marmion drank a fair good rest,
The Captain pledged his noble guest,
The cup went through among the rest,
Who drain'd it merrily ;
Alone the Palmer pass'd it by,
Though Selby press'd him courteously.
This was a sign the feast was o'er ;
It hush'd the merry wassel roar,
The minstrels ceased to sound.
Soon in the castle nought was heard
But the slow footstep of the guard,
Pacing his sober round.

XXVI.

With early dawn Lord Marmion rose :
And first the chapel doors unclosed ;
Then, after morning rites were done
(A hasty mass from Friar John),
And knight and squire had broke their fast,
On rich substantial repast,
Lord Marmion's bugles blew to horse :
Then came the stirrup-cup in course :
Between the Baron and his host
No point of courtesy was lost ;

High thanks were by Lord Marmion paid,
Solemn excuse the Captain made,
Till, filing from the gate, had pass'd
That noble train, their Lord the last.
Then loudly rung the trumpet call ;
Thunder'd the cannon from the wall,
And shook the Scottish shore ;
Around the castle eddied slow,
Volumes of smoke as white as snow,
And hid its turrets hoar ;
Till they roll'd forth upon the air,
And met the river breezes there,
Which gave again the prospect fair.

CANTO SECOND.

THE CONVENT.

I.

THE breeze which swept away the smoke,
Round Norham Castle roll'd,
When all the loud artillery spoke,
With lightning-flash and thunder-stroke,
As Marmion left the Hold.
It curl'd not Tweed alone, that breeze,
For, far upon Northumbrian seas,
It freshly blew, and strong,
Where, from high Whitby's cloister'd pile,
Bound to St. Cuthbert's Holy Isle,
It bore a bark along.

Upon the gale she stoop'd her side,
And bounded o'er the swelling tide,
As she were dancing home ;
The merry seamen laugh'd, to see
Their gallant ship so lustily
Furrow the green sea-foam.
Much joy'd they in their honour'd freight,
For, on the deck, in chair of state,
The Abbess of Saint Hilda placed,
With five fair nuns, the galley graced.

II.

'Twas sweet to see these holy maids,
Like birds escaped to green-wood shades
Their first flight from the cage,
How timid, and how curious too,
For all to them was strange and new,
And all the common sights they view,
Their wonderment engage.
One eyed the shrouds and swelling sail,
With many a benedicite ;
One at the rippling surge grew pale,
And would for terror pray ;
Then shriek'd, because the sea-dog, nigh,
His round black head, and sparkling eye,
Rear'd o'er the foaming spray ;
And one would still adjust her veil,
Disorder'd by the summer gale,
Perchance lest some more worldly eye
Her dedicated charms might spy ;
Perchance, because such action graced
Her fair-turned arm and slender waist.
Light was each simple bosom there,

Save two, who ill might pleasure share—
The Abbess and the Novice Clare.

III.

The Abbess was of noble blood,
But early took the veil and hood,
Ere upon life she cast a look,
Or knew the world that she forsook.
Fair too she was, and kind had been
As she was fair, but ne'er had seen
For her a timid lover sigh,
Nor knew the influence of her eye.
Love, to her ear, was but a name
Combined with vanity and shame ;
Her hopes, her fears, her joys, were all
Bounded within the cloister wall :
The deadliest sin her mind could reach,
Was of monastic rule the breach ;
And her ambition's highest aim
To emulate Saint Hilda's fame.
For this she gave her ample dower,
To raise the convent's eastern tower ;
For this, with carving rare and quaint,
She deck'd the chapel of the saint,
And gave the relic-shrine of cost,
With ivory and gems emboss'd.
The poor her Convent's bounty blest,
The pilgrim in its halls found rest.

IV.

Black was her garb, her rigid rule
Reform'd on Benedictine school ;
Her cheek was pale, her form was spare ;
Vigils, and penitence austere,

Had early quenched the light of youth,
But gentle was the dame, in sooth ;
Though, vain of her religious sway,
She loved to see her maids obey.
Yet nothing stern was she in cell,
And the nuns loved their Abbess well.
Sad was this voyage to the dame ;
Summon'd to Lindisfarne, she came,
There, with Saint Cuthbert's Abbot old,
And Tynemouth's Prioress, to hold
A chapter of St. Benedict,
For inquisition stern and strict,
On two apostates from the faith,
And, if need were, to doom to death.

V.

Nought say I here of Sister Clare,
Save this, that she was young and fair ;
As yet, a novice unprofess'd,
Lovely and gentle, but distress'd.
She was betroth'd to one now dead,
Or worse, who had dishonour'd fled.
Her kinsmen bade her give her hand
To one, who loved her for her land :
Herself, almost heart-broken now,
Was bent to take the vestal vow,
And shroud within Saint Hilda's gloom
Her blasted hopes and wither'd bloom.

VI.

She sate upon the galley's prow,
And seem'd to mark the waves below ;
Nay, seem'd, so fix'd her look and eye,
To count them as they glided by.

She saw them not—'twas seeming all—
Far other scene her thoughts recall—
A sun-scorch'd desert, waste and bare,
Nor waves, nor breezes, murmur'd there ;
There saw she, where some careless hand
O'er a dead corpse had heap'd the sand,
To hide it till the jackals come,
To tear it from the scanty tomb.—
See what a woeful look was given,
As she raised up her eyes to heaven !

VII.

Lovely, and gentle, and distress'd—
These charms might tame the fiercest breast ;
Harpers have sung, and poets told,
That he, in fury uncontroll'd,
The shaggy monarch of the wood,
Before a virgin, fair and good,
Hath pacified his savage mood.
But passions in the human frame
Oft put the lion's rage to shame :
And jealousy, by dark intrigue,
With sordid avarice in league,
Had practised with their bowl and knife,
Against the mourner's harmless life.
This crime was charged 'gainst those who lay
Prison'd in Cuthbert's islet grey.

VIII.

And now the vessel skirts the strand
Of mountainous Northumberland ;
Towns, towers, and halls, successive rise,
And catch the nun's delighted eyes.

Monk-Wearmouth soon behind them lay ;
And Tynemouth's priory and bay ;
They mark'd, amid her trees, the hall
Of lofty Seaton-Delaval ;
They saw the Blythe and Wansbeck floods
Rush to the sea through sounding woods ;
They pass'd the tower of Widdrington,
Mother of many a valiant son ;
At Coquet-isle their beads they tell
To the good Saint who own'd the cell ;
Then did the Alne attention claim,
And Warkworth, proud of Percy's name ;
And next, they cross'd themselves, to hear
The whitening breakers sound so near,
Where, boiling thro' the rocks, they roar
On Dunstanborough's cavern'd shore ;
Thy tower, proud Bamborough, mark'd they there,
King Ida's castle, huge and square,
From its tall rock look grimly down,
And on the swelling ocean frown ;
Then from the coast they bore away,
And reach'd the Holy Island's bay.

IX.

The tide did now its flood-mark gain,
And girdled in the Saint's domain :
For, with the flow and ebb, its style
Varies from continent to isle ;
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
The pilgrims to the shrine find way ;
Twice every day, the waves efface
Of staves and sandall'd feet the trace.

As to the port the galley flew,
Higher and higher rose to view
The Castle with its battled walls,
The ancient Monastery's halls,
A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
Placed on the margin of the isle.

I.

In Saxon strength that Abbey frown'd,
With massive arches broad and round,
That rose alternate, row and row,
On ponderous columns, short and low,
Built ere the art was known,
By pointed aisle, and shafted stalk,
The arcades of an alley'd walk
To emulate in stone.

On the deep walls, the heathen Dane
Had pour'd his impious rage in vain ;
And needful was such strength to these,
Exposed to the tempestuous seas,
Scourged by the winds' eternal sway,
Open to rovers fierce as they,
Which could twelve hundred years withstand
Winds, waves, and northern pirates' hand.
Not but that portions of the pile,
Rebuilt in a later style,
Show'd where the spoiler's hand had been ;
Not but the wasting sea-breeze keen
Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,
And moulder'd in his niche the saint,
And rounded, with consuming power,
The pointed angles of each tower ;
Yet still entire the Abbey stood,
Like veteran, worn, but unsubdued.

XI.

Soon as they near'd his turrets strong,
The maidens raised Saint Hilda's song,
And with the sea-wave and the wind,
Their voices, sweetly shrill, combined,
And made harmonious close ;
Then, answering from the sandy shore,
Half drown'd amid the breakers' roar,
According chorus rose :
Down to the haven of the Isle,
The monks and nuns in order file,
From Cuthbert's cloisters grim ;
Banner and cross, and relics there,
To meet St. Hilda's maids, they bare ;
And, as they caught the sounds on air,
They echoed back the hymn.
The islanders, in joyous mood,
Rush'd emulously through the flood,
To hale the bark to land ;
Conspicuous by her veil and hood,
Signing the cross, the Abbess stood,
And bless'd them with her hand.

XII.

Suppose we now the welcome said,
Suppose the Convent banquet made :
All through the holy dome,
Through cloister, aisle, and gallery,
Wherever vestal maid might pry,
Nor risk to meet unhallow'd eye,
The stranger sisters roam ;
Till fell the evening damp with dew,
And the sharp sea-breeze coldly blew,

For there, even summer night is chill.
Then, having stray'd and gazed their fill,
They closed around the fire ;
And all, in turn, essay'd to paint
The rival merits of their saint,
A theme that ne'er can tire
A holy maid ; for be it known,
That their saint's honour is their own.

XIII.

Then Whitby's nuns exulting told,
How to their house three Barons bold
Must menial service do ;
While horns blow out a note of shame,
And monks cry " Fye upon your name !
In wrath, for loss of 'lvan game,
St. Hilda's priest ye slew. " —
" This, on Ascension-day, each year,
While labouring on our harbour-pier,
Must Herbert, Bruce, and Percy hear. " —
They told, how in their convent cell
A Saxon princess once did dwell,
The lovely Edelfled ;
And how, of thousand snakes, each one
Was changed into a coil of stone,
When holy Hilda pray'd.
Themselves, within their holy bound,
Their stony folds had often found.
They told how sea-fowls' pinions fail
As over Whitby's towers they sail,
And sinking down, with flutterings faint,
They do their homage to the saint.

XIV.

Nor did St. Cuthbert's daughters fail
To vie with these in holy tale ;
His body's resting-place, of old,
How oft their patron changed, they told ;
How, when the rude Dane burn'd their pile,
The monks fled forth from Holy Isle ;
O'er northern mountain, marsh, and moor,
From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
Seven years Saint Cuthbert's corpse they bore.
They rested them in fair Melrose ;
But though, alive, he loved it well,
Not there his relics might repose ;
For, wondrous tale to tell !
In his stone coffin forth he rides,
A ponderous bark for river tides,
Yet light as gossamer it glides,
Downward to Tilmouth cell.
Nor long was his abiding there,
For southward did the saint repair ;
Chester-le-Street and Rippon saw
His holy corpse, ere Wardilaw
Hail'd him with joy and fear ;
And, after many wanderings past,
He chose his lordly seat at last,
Where his cathedral, huge and vast,
Looks down upon the Wear :
There, deep in Durham's Gothic shade,
His relics are in secret laid ;
But none may know the place,
Save of his holiest servants three,
Deep sworn to solemn secrecy,
Who share that wondrous grace.

XV.

Who may his miracles declare !
Even Scotland's dauntless king, and heir
(Although with them they led
Galwegians, wild as ocean's gale,
And Lodon's knights, all sheathed in mail,
And the bold men of Teviotdale),
Before his standard fled.
'Twas he, to vindicate his reign,
Edged Alfred's falchion on the Dane,
And turn'd the Conqueror back again,
When, with his Norman bowyer band,
He came to waste Northumberland.

XVI.

But fain Saint Hilda's nuns would learn
If, on a rock by Lindisfarne,
Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his name :
Such tales had Whitby's fishers told,
And said they might his shape behold,
And hear his anvil sound ;
A deaden'd clang—a huge dim form,
Seen but, and heard, when gathering storm
And night were closing round.
But this, as tale of idle fame,
The nuns of Lindisfarne disclaim.

XVII.

While round the fire such legends go,
Far different was the scene of woe,

Where, in a secret aisle beneath,
Council was held of life and death.
It was more dark and lone, that vault,
Than the worst dungeon cell :
Old Colwulf built it, for his fault,
In penitence to dwell,
When he, for cowl and beads, laid down
The Saxon battle-axe and crown.
This den, which, chilling every sense
Of feeling, hearing, sight,
Was call'd the Vault of Penitence,
Excluding air and light,
Was, by the prelate Sexhelm, made
A place of burial for such dead,
As, having died in mortal sin,
Might not be laid the church within.
'Twas now a place of punishment ;
Whence if so loud a shriek were sent,
As reach'd the upper air,
The hearers bless'd themselves, and said,
The spirits of the sinful dead
Bemoan'd their torments there.

XVIII.

But though, in the monastic pile,
Did of this penitential aisle
Some vague tradition go,
Few only, save the Abbot, knew
Where the place lay ; and still more few
Were those who had from him the clew
To that dread vault to go.
Victim and executioner
Were blindfold when transported there.

In low dark rounds the arches hung,
From the rude rock the side-walls sprung ;
The grave-stones, rudely sculptured o'er,
Half sunk in earth, by time half wore,
Were all the pavement of the floor ;
The mildew-drops fell one by one,
With tinkling splash, upon the stone.
A cresset, in an iron chain,
Which served to light this drear domain,
With damp and darkness seem'd to strive,
As if it scarce might keep alive ;
And yet it dimly served to show
The awful conclave met below.

XIX.

There, met to doom in secrecy,
Were placed the heads of convents three :
All servants of St. Benedict,
The statutes of whose order strict
On iron table lay ;
In long black dress, on seats of stone,
Behind were these three judges shown
By the pale cresset's ray :
The Abbess of St. Hilda's, there,
Sat for a space with visage bare,
Until, to hide her bosom's swell,
And tear-drops that for pity fell,
She closely drew her veil :
Yon shrouded figure, as I guess,
By her proud mien and flowing dress,
Is Tynemouth's haughty Prioress,
And she with awe looks pale :
And he, that Ancient Man, whose sight
Has long been quench'd by age's night,

Upon whose wrinkled brow alone,
Nor ruth, nor mercy's trace, is shown,
Whose look is hard and stern—
Saint Cuthbert's Abbot is his style ;
For sanctity call'd, through the isle,
The Saint of Lindisfarne.

XX.

Before them stood a guilty pair ;
But, though an equal fate they share,
Yet one alone deserves our care.
Her sex a page's dress belied ;
The cloak and doublet, loosely tied,
Obscured her charms, but could not hide.
Her cap down o'er her face she drew ;
And, on her doublet breast,
She tried to hide the badge of blue,
Lord Marmion's falcon crest.
But, at the Prioress' command,
A Monk undid the silver band
That tied her tresses fair,
And raised the bonnet from her head,
And down her splendid form they spread,
In ringlets rich and rare.
Constance de Beverley they know,
Sister profess'd of Fontevraud,
Whom the church number'd with the dead,
For broken vows, and convent fled.

XXI.

When thus her face was given to view
(Although so pallid was her hue,

It did a ghastly contrast bear
To those bright ringlets glistening fair),
Her look composed, and steady eye,
Bespoke a matchless constancy ;
And there she stood so calm and pale,
That, but her breathing did not fail,
And motion slight of eye and head,
And of her bosom, warranted
That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,
You might have thought a form of wax,
Wrought to the very life, was there ;
So still she was, so pale, so fair.

XXII.

Her comrade was a sordid soul,
Such as does murder for a meed ;
Who, but of fear, knows no control,
Because his conscience, sear'd and foul,
Feels not the import of his deed ;
One, whose brute-feeling ne'er aspires
Beyond his own more brute desires.
Such tools the Tempter ever needs,
To do the savagest of deeds ;
For them no visioned terrors daunt,
Their nights no fancied spectres haunt,
One fear with them, of all most base,
The fear of death—alone finds place.
This wretch was clad in frock and cowl,
And shamed not loud to moan and howl,
His body on the floor to dash,
And crouch, like hound beneath the lash ;
While his mute partner, standing near,
Waited her doom without a tear

XXIII.

Yet well the luckless wretch might shriek,
Well might her paleness terror speak !
For there were seen in that dark wall,
Two niches, narrow, deep, and tall ;—
Who enters at such grisly door,
Shall ne'er, I ween, find exit more.
In each a slender meal was laid,
Of roots, and water, and of bread :
By each, in Benedictine dress,
Two haggard monks stood motionless ;
Who, holding high a blazing torch,
Show'd the grim entrance of the porch :
Reflecting back the smoky beam,
The dark-red walls and arches gleam.
Hewn stones and cement were display'd,
And building tools in order laid.

XXIV.

These executioners were chose,
As men who were with mankind foes,
And with despite and envy fired,
Into the cloister had retired :
Or who, in desperate doubt of grace,
Strove, by deep penance, to efface,
Of some foul crime the stain ;
For, as the vassals of her will,
Such men the Church selected still,
As either joy'd in doing ill,
Or thought more grace to gain,
If, in her cause, they wrestled down
Feelings their nature strove to own.

By strange device were they brought there,
They knew not how, nor knew not where.

XXV.

And now that blind old Abbot rose,
To speak the Chapter's doom,
On those the wall was to enclose,
Alive, within the tomb,
But stopp'd, because that woeful Maid,
Gathering her powers, to speak essay'd.
Twice she essay'd, and twice in vain ;
Her accents might no utterance gain ;
Nought but imperfect murmurs slip
From her convulsed and quivering lip ;
'Twixt each attempt all was so still,
You seem'd to hear a distant rill—
'Twas ocean's swells and falls ;
For though this vault of sin and fear
Was to the sounding surge so near,
A tempest there you scarce could hear,
So massive were the walls.

XXVI.

At length, an effort sent apart
The blood that curdled to her heart,
And light came to her eye,
And colour dawn'd upon her cheek,
A hectic and a flutter'd streak,
Like that left on the Cheviot peak
By Autumn's stormy sky ;
And when her silence broke at length,
Still as she spoke she gather'd strength,
And arm'd herself to bear.

It was a fearful sight to see
Such high resolve and constancy,
In form so soft and fair.

XXVII.

"I speak not to implore your grace ;
Well know I, for one minute's space
Successless might I sue :
Nor do I speak your prayers to gain ;
For if a death of lingering pain,
To cleanse my sins, be penance vain,
Vain are your masses too.—
I listen'd to a traitor's tale,
I left the convent and the veil ;
For three long years I bow'd my pride,
A horse-boy in his train to ride ;
And well my folly's meed he gave,
Who forfeited, to be his slave,
All here, and all beyond the grave.—
He saw young Clara's face more fair,
He knew her of broad lands the heir,
Forgot his vows, his faith forswore,
And Constance was beloved no more. —
'Tis an old tale, and often told ;
But did my fate and wish agree,
Ne'er had been read, in story old,
Of maiden true betray'd for gold,
That loved, or was avenged, like me !

XXVIII.

"The King approved his favourite's aim ;
In vain a rival barr'd his claim,
Whose fate with Clare's was plight,

For he attaints that rival's fame
With treason's charge—and on they came.
In mortal lists to fight.
Their oaths are said,
Their prayers are pray'd,
Their lances in the rest are laid,
They meet in mortal shock ;
And, hark ! the throng, with thundering cry,
Shout ' Marmion, Marmion ! to the sky,
De Wilton to the block !'
Say ye, who preach Heaven shall decide
When in the lists two champions ride,
Say, was Heaven's justice here !
When, loyal in his love and faith,
Wilton found overthrow or death,
Beneath a traitor's spear !
How false the charge, how true he fell,
This guilty packet best can tell."—
Then drew a packet from her breast,
Paused, gather'd voice, and spoke the rest.

XXIX.

"Still was false Marmion's bridal staid ;
To Whitby's convent fled the maid,
The hated match to shun.
'Ho ! shifts she thus ?' King Henry cried,
'Sir Marmion, she shall be thy bride,
If she were sworn a nun.'
One way remain'd—the King's command
Sent Marmion to the Scottish land ;
I linger'd here, and rescue plann'd
Far Clara and for me :

This caitiff monk, for gold, did swear.
He would to Whitby's shrine repair,
And, by his drugs, my rival fair
A saint in heaven should be:
But ill the dastard kept his oath,
Whose cowardice has undone us both.

XXX.

"And now my tongue the secret tells,
Not that remorse my bosom swells,
But to assure my soul that none
Shall ever wed with Marmion.
Had fortune my last hope betray'd,
This packet, to the King convey'd,
Had given him to the headsman's stroke,
Although my heart that instant broke.—
Now, men of death, work forth your will,
For I can suffer, and be still;
And come he slow, or come he fast,
It is but Death who comes at last.

XXXI.

"Yet dread me, from my living tomb,
Ye vassal slaves of bloody Rome!
If Marmion's late remorse should wake
Full soon such vengeance will he take,
That you shall wish the fiery Dane
Had rather been your guest again.
Behind, a darker hour ascends!
The altars quake, the crosier bends,
The ire of a despotic King
Rides forth upon destruction's wing;
Then shall these vaults, so strong and deep,
Burst open to the sea-wind's sweep;

Some traveller then shall find my bones
Whitening amid disjointed stones,
And, ignorant of priests' cruelty,
Marvel such relics here should be."

XXXII.

Fix'd was her look, and stern her air :
Back from her shoulders stream'd her hair ;
The locks, that wont her brow to shade,
Stared up erectly from her head ;
Her figure seem'd to rise more high ;
Her voice, despair's wild energy
Had given a tone of prophecy.
Appall'd the astonish'd conclave sate ;
With stupid eyes, the men of fate
Gazed on the light inspired form,
And listen'd for the avenging storm ;
The judges felt the victim's dread ;
No hand was moved, no word was said,
Till thus the Abbot's doom was given,
Raising his sightless balls to heaven :—
"Sister, let thy sorrows cease ;
Sinful brother, part in peace !"
From that dire dungeon, place of doom,
Of execution too, and tomb,
Paced forth the judges three ;
Sorrow it were, and shame, to tell
The butcher-work that there befell,
When they had glided from the cell
Of sin and misery.

XXXIII.

An hundred winding steps convey
That conclave to the upper day ;

But, ere they breathed the fresher air,
They heard the shriekings of despair,
And many a stifled groan :
With speed their upward way they take
(Such speed as age and fear can make),
And cross'd themselves for terror's sake
As hurrying, tottering on :
Even in the vesper's heavenly tone
They seem'd to hear a dying groan,
And bade the passing knell to toll
For welfare of a parting soul.
Slow o'er the midnight wave it swung,
Northumbrian rocks in answer rung ;
To Warkworth cell the echoes roll'd,
His beads the wakeful hermit told,
The Bamborough peasant raised his head,
But slept ere half a prayer he said ;
So far was heard the mighty knell,
The stag sprung up on Cheviot Fell,
Spread his broad nostril to the wind,
Listened before, aside, behind,
Then couch'd him down beside the hind.
And quaked among the mountain fern,
To hear that sound so dull and stern.

CANTO THIRD.

THE HOSTEL, OR INN.

I.

THE livelong day Lord Marmion rode :
The mountain path the Palmer show'd,

By glen and streamlet winded still,
Where stunted birches hid the rill.
They might not choose the lowland road,
For the Merse forayers were abroad,
Who, fired with hate and thirst of prey,
Had scarcely fail'd to bar their way.
Oft on the trampling band, from crown
Of some tall cliff, the deer look'd down ;
On wing of jet, from his repose
In the deep heath, the black-cock rose ;
Sprung from the gorse the timid roe,
Nor waited for the bending bow ;
And when the stony path began,
By which the naked peak they wan,
Up flew the snowy ptarmigan.
The noon had long been pass'd before
They gain'd the height of Lammermoor :
Thence winding down the northern way,
Before them, at the close of day,
Old Gifford's towers and hamlet lay.

II.

No summons calls them to the tower,
To spend the hospitable hour.
To Scotland's camp the Lord was gone ;
His cautious dame, in bower alone,
Dreaded her castle to unclose,
So late, to unknown friends or foes.
On through the hamlet as they paced,
Before a porch, whose front was graced
With bush and flagon trimly placed,
Lord Marmion drew his rein :

The village inn seem'd large, though rude ;
 Its cheerful fire and hearty food
 Might well relieve his train.

Down from their seats the horsemen sprung,
 With jingling spurs the court-yard rung ;
 They bind the horses to the stall,
 For forage, food, and firing call,
 And various clamour fills the hall :
 Weighing the labour with the cost,
 Toils everywhere the bustling host.

III.

Soon, by the chimney's merry blaze,
 Through the rude hostel might you gaze,
 Might see, where in dark nook aloof,
 The rafters of the sooty roof
 Bore wealth of winter cheer :
 Of sea-fowl dried, and solands store,
 And gammons of the tusky boar,
 And savoury haunch of deer.
 The chimney arch projected wide ;
 Above, around it, and beside,
 Were tools for housewife's hand ;
 Nor wanted, in that martial day,
 The implements of Scottish fray,
 The buckler, lance, and brand.
 Beneath its shade, the place of state,
 On oaken settle Marmion sate,
 And view'd around the blazing hearth
 His followers mix in noisy mirth ;
 Whom with brown ale, in jolly tide,
 From ancient vessels ranged aside,
 Full actively their host supplied.

IV.

Theirs was the glee of martial breast,
And laughter theirs at little jest ;
And oft Lord Marmion deign'd to aid,
And mingle in the mirth they made ;
For though, with men of high degree,
The proudest of the proud was he,
Yet, train'd in camps, he knew the art
To win the soldier's hardy heart.
They love a captain to obey,
Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May ;
With open hand, and brow as free,
Lover of wine and minstrelsy ;
Ever the first to scale a tower,
As venturous in a lady's bower :—
Such buxom chief shall lead his host
From India's fires to Zembla's frost.

V.

Resting upon his pilgrim staff,
Right opposite the Palmer stood ;
His thin dark visage seen but half,
Half hidden by his hood.
Still fixed on Marmion was his look,
Which he, who ill such gaze could brook,
Strove by a frown to quell ;
But not for that, though more than once
Full met their stern encountering glance,
The Palmer's visage fell.

VI.

By fits less frequent from the crowd
Was heard the burst of laughter loud :

For still an squire and archer stared
 On that dark face and matted beard,
 Their glee and game declined.
 All gazed at length in silence drear,
 Unbroke, save when in comrade's ear
 Some yeoman, wondering in his fear,
 Thus whisper'd forth his mind :—
 " Saint Mary ! saw'st thou e'er such sight ?
 How pale his cheek, his eye how bright,
 Whene'er the firebrand's fickle light
 Glances beneath his cowl !
 Full on our Lord he sets his eye ;
 For his best palfrey, would not I
 Endure that sullen scowl."

VII.

But Marmion, as to chase the awe
 Which thus had quell'd their hearts, who saw
 The ever-varying fire-light show
 That figure stern and face of woe,
 Now call'd upon a squire :—
 " Fitz-Eustace, know'st thou not some lay,
 To speed the lingering night away ?
 We slumber by the fire."—

VIII.

" So please you," thus the youth rejoin'd,
 " Our choicest minstrel's left behind.
 Ill may we hope to please your ear,
 Accustom'd Constant's strains to hear.
 The harp full deftly can he strike,
 And wake the lover's lute alike ;

P-P

To dear Saint Valentine, no thrush
Sings livelier from a spring-tide bush,
No nightingale her love-lorn tune
More sweetly warbles to the moon.
Woe to the cause, whate'er it be,
Detains from us his melody,
Lavish'd on rocks, on billows stern,
Or duller monks of Lindisfarne.
Now must I venture, as I may,
To sing his favourite roundelay."

IX.

A Mellow voice Fitz-Eustace had,
The air he chose was wild and sad ;
Such have I heard, in Scottish land,
Rise from the busy harvest band,
When falls before the mountaineer,
On Lowland plains, the ripen'd ear.
Now one shrill voice the notes prolong,
Now a wild chorus swells the song :
Oft have I listen'd and stood still,
As it came soften'd up the hill,
And deem'd it the lament of men
Who languish'd for their native glen :
And thought how sad would be such sound
On Susquehana's swampy ground,
Kentucky's wood-encumber'd brake,
Or wild Ontario's boundless lake,
Where heart-sick exiles, in the strain,
Recall'd fair Scotland's hills again !

MARMION.

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X.

SONG.

Where shall the lover rest,
Whom the fates sever
From his true maiden's breast,
Parted for ever ?
Where, through groves deep and high,
Sounds the far billow,
Where early violets die,
Under the willow.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, etc. Soft shall be his pillow.

There, through the summer day,
Cool streams are laving ;
There, while the tempests sway,
Scarce are boughs waving ;
There, thy rest shalt thou take,
Parted for ever,
Never again to wake,
Never, O never !

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, etc. Never, O never !

XI.

Where shall the traitor rest,
He, the deceiver,
Who could win maiden's breast,
Ruin, and leave her ?

In the lost battle,
Borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle
With groans of the dying.

CHORUS.

Elen loro, etc. There shall he be lying.

Her wing shall the eagle flap
O'er the false-hearted ;
His warm blood the wolf shall lap,
Ere life be parted.
Shame and dishonour sit
By his grave ever,
Blessing shall hallow it—
Never, O never !

CHORUS.

Elen loro, etc. Never, O never !

XII.

It ceased, the melancholy sound ;
And silence sunk on all around.
The air was sad : but sadder still
It fell on Marmion's ear,
And plain'd as if disgrace and ill,
And shameful death, were near.
He drew his mantle past his face,
Between it and the band,
And rested with his head a space,
Reclining on his hand.
His thoughts I scan not ; but I ween,
That, could their import have been seen,

The meanest groom in all the hall,
That e'er tied courses to a stall,
Would scarce have wish'd to be their prey,
For Lutterward and Foutenaye.

XIII.

High minds, of native pride and force,
Most deeply feel thy pangs, Remorse !
Fear, for their scourge, mean villains have,
Thou art the torturer of the brave !
Yet fatal strength they boast to steel
Their minds to bear the wounds they feel,
Even while they writhe beneath the smart
Of civil conflict in the heart.
For soon Lord Marmion raised his head,
And, smiling, to Fitz-Eustace said—
“ Is it not strange, that, as ye sung,
Seem'd in mine ear a death-peal rung,
Such as in nunneries they toll
For some departing sister's soul ?
Say, what may this portend ? ”
Then first the Palmer silence broke
(The livelong day he had not spoke),
“ The death of a dear friend.”

XIV.

Marmion, whose steady heart and eye
Ne'er changed in worst extremity ;
Marmion whose soul could scantily brook,
Even from his King, a haughty look ;
Whose accent of command controll'd,
In camps, the boldest of the bold—

Thought, look, and utterance fail'd him now,
Fall'n was his glance, and flush'd his brow ;
For either in the tone,
Or something in the Palmer's look,
So full upon his conscience strook,
That answer he found none.
Thus oft it haps, that when within
They shrink at sense of secret sin,
A feather daunts the brave ;
A fool's wild speech confounds the wise,
And proudest princes veil their eyes
Before their meanest slave.

XV.

Well might he falter !—By his aid
Was Constance Beverley betray'd.
Not that he augur'd of the doom
Which on the living closed the tomb :
But, tired to hear the desperate maid
Threaten by turns, beseech, upbraid ;
And wroth, because, in wild despair,
She practised on the life of Clare ;
Its fugitive the Church he gave,
Though not a victim, but a slave ;
And deem'd restraint in convent strange
Would hide her wrongs, and her revenge.
Himself, proud Henry's favourite peer,
Held Romish thunders idle fear,
Secure his pardon he might hold,
For some slight mulct of penance-gold.
Thus judging, he gave secret way,
When the stern priests surprised their prey.

His train but deem'd the favourite page
Was left behind, to spare his age ;
Or other if they deem'd, none dares
To mutter what he thought and heard :
Woe to the vassal who durst pry
Into Lord Marmion's privacy !

XVI.

His conscience slept—he deem'd her well,
And safe secured in distant cell ;
But, waken'd by her favourite lay,
And that strange Palmer's boding say,
That fell so ominous and drear,
Full on the object of his fear,
To aid remorse's venom'd throes,
Dark tales of convent-vengeance rose :
And Constance, late betray'd and scorn'd,
All lovely on his soul return'd ;
Lovely as when, at treacherous call,
She left her convent's peaceful wall,
Crimson'd with shame, with terror mute,
Dreading alike escape, pursuit,
Till love, victorious o'er alarms,
Hid fears and blushes in his arms.

XVII.

" Alas ! " he thought, " how changed that mien !
How changed these timid looks have been,
Since years of guilt, and of disguise,
Have steel'd her brow, and arm'd her eyes !
No more of virgin terror speaks
The blood that mantles in her cheeks ;

Pierce, and unfeminine, are there,
Frenzy for joy, for grief despair ;
And I the cause—for whom were given
Her peace on earth, her hopes in heaven !—
"Would," thought he, as the picture grows,
"I on its stalk had left the rose !
Oh, why should man's success remove
The very charms that wake his love !
Her convent's peaceful solitude
Is now a prison harsh and rude,
And, pent within the narrow cell,
How will her spirit chafe and swell !
How brook the stern monastic laws !
The penance how—and I the cause !
Vigil and scourge—perchance even worse !"
And twice he rose to cry, "To horse !"—
And twice his Sovereign's mandate came,
Like damp upon a kindling flame ;
And twice he thought, "Gave I not charge
She should be safe, though not at large ?
They durst not, for their island, shred
One golden ringlet from her head."

XVIII.

While thus in Marmion's bosom strove
Repentance and reviving love,
Like whirlwinds, whose contending sway
I've seen Loch Vennachar obey,
'Their Host the Palmer's speech had heard,
And, talkative, took up the word :
"Ay, reverend Pilgrim, you, who stray
From Scotland's simple land away,
To visit realms afar,

Full often learn the art to know
Of future weal, or future woe,
By word, or sign, or star :
Yet might a knight his fortune hear.
If, knight-like, he despises fear,
Not far from hence—if fathers old
Aright our hamlet legend told."—
These broken words the menials move
(For marvels still the vulgar love),
And, Marmion giving license cold,
His tale the host thus gladly told :—

XIX.

THE HOST'S TALE.

"A Clerk could tell what years had flown
Since Alexander fill'd our throne
(Third monarch of that warlike name),
And eke the time when here he came
To seek Sir Hugo, then our lord :
A braver never drew a sword ;
A wiser never, at the hour
Of midnight, spoke the word of power :
The same, whom ancient records call
The founder of the Goblin-Hall.
I would, Sir Knight, your longer stay
Gave you that cavern to survey.
Of lofty roof, and ample size,
Beneath the castle deep it lies :
To hew the living rock profound,
The floor to pave, the arch to round,
There never toil'd a mortal arm,
It all was wrought by word and charm ;

And I have heard my grandsire say,
That the wild clamour and affray
Of those dread artisans of hell,
Who labour'd under Hugo's spell,
Sounded as loud as ocean's war,
Among the caverns of Dunbar.

IX.

"The King Lord Gifford's castle sought,
Deep labouring with uncertain thought ;
Even then he muster'd all his host,
To meet upon the western coast ;
For Norse and Danish galleys plied
Their oars within the frith of Clyde.
There floated Haco's banner trim,
Above Norweyan warriors grim,
Savage of heart, and large of limb ;
Threatening both continent and isle,
Bute, Arran, Cunninghame, and Kyle.
Lord Gifford, deep beneath the ground,
Heard Alexander's bugle sound,
And tarried not his garb to change,
But, in his wizard habit strange,
Came forth—a quaint and fearful sight ;
His mantle lined with fox-skins white ;
His high and wrinkled forehead bore
A pointed cap, such as of yore
Clerks say that Pharaoh's Magi wore :
His shoes were mark'd with cross and spell,
Upon his breast a pentacle ;
His zone, of virgin parchment thin,
Or, as some tell, of dead man's skin,
Bore many a planetary sign,
Combust, and retrograde, and trine ;

And in his hand he held prepared
A naked sword without a guard.

XXI.

"Dire dealings with the fiendish race
Had mark'd strange lines upon his face ;
Vigil and fast had worn him grim,
His eyesight dazzled seem'd and dim,
As one unused to upper day ;
Even his own menials with dismay
Beheld, Sir Knight, the grisly Sire,
In his unwonted wild attire ;
Unwonted, for traditions run,
He seldom thus beheld the sun.—
'I know,' he said—his voice was hoarse,
And broken seem'd its hollow force—
'I know the cause, although untold,
Why the King seeks his vassal's hold :
Vainly from me my liege would know
His kingdom's future weal or woe ;
But yet, if strong his arm and heart,
His courage may do more than art.

XXII.

"Of middle air the demons proud,
Who ride upon the racking cloud,
Can read, in fix'd or wandering star,
The issue of events afar ;
But still their sullen aid withhold,
Save when by mightier force controll'd.
Such late I summon'd to my hall ;
And though so potent was the call,
That scarce the deepest nook of hell
I deem'd a refuge from the spell,

Yet, obstinate in silence still,
 The haughty demon mocks my skill.
 But thou—who little know'st thy might,
 As born upon that blessed night
 When yawning graves, and dying groan,
 Proclaim'd hell's empire overthrown—
 With untaught valour shalt compel
 Response denied to magic spell.
 'Gramercy,' quoth our Monarch free,
 'Place him but front to front with me,
 And, by this good and honour'd brand,
 The gift of Cœur-de-Lion's hand,
 Soothly I swear, that, tide what tide,
 The demon shall a buffet bide.'—
 His bearing bold the wizard view'd,
 And thus, well pleased, his speech renew'd :—
 'There spoke the blood of Malcolm !—mark :
 Forth pacing hence, at midnight dark,
 The rampart seek, whose circling crown
 Crests the ascent of yonder down :
 A southern entrance shalt thou find ;
 There halt, and there thy bugle wind,
 And trust thine elfin foe to see,
 In guise of thy worst enemy :
 Couch then thy lance, and spur thy steed—
 Upon him ! and Saint George to speed !
 If he go down, thou soon shalt know
 Whate'er these airy sprites can show ;—
 If thy heart fail thee in the strife,
 I am no warrant for thy life.'

XXIII.

" Soon as the midnight bell did ring,
 Alone, and arm'd, forth rode the King

To that old camp's deserted round :
Sir Knight, you well might mark the mound,
Left hand the town—the Pictish race,
The trench, long since, in blood did trace ;
The moor around is brown and bare,
The space within is green and fair.
The spot our village children know,
For there the earliest wild-flowers grow ;
But woe betide the wandering wight
That treads its circle in the night !
The breadth across, a bowshot clear,
Gives ample space for full career :
Opposed to the four points of heaven,
By four deep gaps are entrance given.
The southernmost our Monarch past,
Halted, and blew a gallant blast ;
And on the north, within the ring,
Appear'd the form of England's King,
Who then, a thousand leagues afar,
In Palestine waged holy war :
Yet arms like England's did he wield,
Alike the leopards in the shield,
Alike his Syrian courser's frame,
The rider's length of limb the same :
Long afterwards did Scotland know,
Fell Edward was her deadliest foe.

XXIV.

"The vision made our Monarch start
But soon he mann'd his noble heart,
And in the first career they ran,
The Elfin Knight fell, horse and man.
Yet did a splinter of his lance
Through Alexander's visor glance,

And razed the skin—a puny wound.
The King, light leaping to the ground,
With naked blade his phantom foe
Compell'd the future war to show.
Of Largs he saw the glorious plain,
Where still gigantic bones remain,
Memorial of the Danish war ;
Himself he saw, amid the field,
On high his brandish'd war-axe wield,
And strike proud Haco from his car,
While all around the shadowy Kings
Denmark's grim ravens cower'd their wings.
'Tis said, that, in that awful night,
Remoter visions met his sight,
Foreshowing future conquests far,
When our sons' sons wage northern war ;
A royal city, tower and spire,
Redden'd the midnight sky with fire,
And shouting crews her navy bore,
Triumphant, to the victor shore.
Such signs may learned clerks explain,
They pass the wit of simple swain.

XXV.

“ The joyful King turned home again,
Headed his host, and quell'd the Dane ;
But yearly, when return'd the night
Of his strange combat with the sprite,
His wound must bleed and smart ;
Lord Gifford then would gibing say,
' Bold as ye were, my liege, ye pay
The penance of your start.

Long since, beneath Dunfermline's nave,
King Alexander fills his grave,
Our Lady give him rest !
Yet still the knightly spear and shield
The Elfin Warrior doth wield,
Upon the brown hill's breast ;
And many a knight hath proved his chance,
In the charm'd ring to break a lance,
But all have foully sped ;
Save two, as legends tell, and they
Were Wallace wight, and Gilbert Hay.--
Gentles, my tale is said."

XXVI.

The quaighs were deep, the liquor strong,
And on the tale the yeoman-throng
Had made a comment sage and long,
But Marmion gave a sign :
And, with their lord, the squires retire
The rest, around the hostel fire,
Their drowsy limbs recline :
For pillow, underneath each head,
'The quiver and the targe were laid.
Deep slumbering on the hostel floor,
Oppress'd with toil and ale, they snore :
'The dying flame, in fitful change,
Threw on the group its shadows strange.

XXVII.

Apart, and nestling in the hay
Of a waste loft, Fitz-Eustace lay ;
Scarce, by the pale moonlight, were seen
The foldings of his mantle green :

Lightly he dreamt, as youth will dream,
Of sport by thicket or by stream.
Of hawk or hound, of ring or glove,
Or, lighter yet, of lady's love.
A cautious tread his slumber broke,
And, close beside him, when he woke,
In moonbeam half, and half in gloom,
Stood a tall form, with nodding plume ;
But, ere his dagger Eustace drew,
His master Marmion's voice he knew.

XXVIII.

—“ Fitz-Eustace ! rise, I cannot rest ;
Yon churl's wild legend haunts my breast,
And graver thoughts have chafed my mood :
The air must cool my feverish blood ;
And fain would I ride forth, to see
The scene of Elfin chivalry.
Arise, and saddle me my steed ;
And, gentle Eustace, take good heed
Thou dost not rouse these drowsy slaves
I would not, that the prating knaves
Had cause for saying, o'er their ale,
That I could credit such a tale.”—
Then softly down the steps they slid,
Eustace the stable door undid,
And, darkling, Marmion's steed array'd,
While, whispering, thus the Baron said :—

XXIX.

“ Did'st never, good my youth, hear tell,
That on the hour when I was born,

Saint George, who graced my sire's chapelle,
Down from his steed of marble fell,

A weary wight forlorn ?

The flattering chaplains all agree,
The champion left his steed to me.
I would, the omen's truth to show,
That I could meet this Elfin Foe !
Blithe would I battle, for the right
To ask one question at the sprite :—
Vain thought ! for elves, if elves there be,
An empty race, by fount or sea,
To dashing waters dance and sing,
Or round the green oak wheel their ring."
Thus speaking, he his steed bestrode,
And from the hostel slowly rode.

XXX.

Fitz-Eustace follow'd him abroad,
And mark'd him pace the village road,
And listen'd to his horse's tramp,
Till, by the lessening sound,
He judged that of the Pictish camp
Lord Marmion sought the round.
Wonder it seem'd, in the squire's eyes,
That one, so wary held, and wise—
Of whom 'twas said, he scarce received
For gospel, what the Church believed—
Should, stirr'd by idle tale,
Ride forth in silence of the night,
As hoping half to meet a sprite,
Array'd in plate and mail.
For little did Fitz-Eustace know,
That passions, in contending flow,
Unfix the strongest mind ;

Wearied from doubt to doubt to flee,
We welcome fond credulity,
Guide confident, though blind.

XXXI.

Little for this Fitz-Eustace cared,
But, patient, waited till he heard,
At distance, prick'd to utmost speed,
The foot-tramp of a flying steed,
Come town-ward rushing on ;
First, dead, as if on turf it trode,
Then, clattering on the village road—
In other pace than forth he yode,
Return'd Lord Marmion.
Down hastily he sprung from selle,
And, in his haste, well-nigh he fell ;
To the squire's hand the rein he threw,
And spoke no word as he withdrew :
But yet the moonlight did betray,
The falcon-crest was soil'd with clay ;
And plainly might Fitz-Eustace see,
By stains upon the charger's knee,
And his left side, that on the moor
He had not kept his footing sure.
Long musing on these wondrous signs,
At length to rest the squire reclines,
Broken and short ; for still, between,
Would dreams of terror intervene :
Eustace did ne'er so blithely mark
The first notes of the morning lark.

CANTO FOURTH

THE CAMP.

I.

EUSTACE, I said, did blithely mark
The first notes of the merry lark.
The lark sang shrill, the cock he crew,
And loudly Marmion's bugles blew,
And with their light and lively call
Brought groom and yeoman to the stall.
Whistling they came, and free of heart,
But soon their mood was changed ;
Complaint was heard on every part,
Of something disarranged.
Some clamour'd loud for armour lost ;
Some brawl'd and wrangled with the host ;
" By Becket's bones," cried one, " I fear
That some false Scot has stolen my spear !"
Young Blount, Lord Marmion's second squire,
Found his steed wet with sweat and mire ;
Although the rated horse-boy sware,
Last night he dress'd him sleek and fair.
While chafed the impatient squire like thunder,
Old Hubert shouts, in fear and wonder—
" Help, gentle Blount ! help, comrades all !
Bevis lies dying in his stall ;
To Marmion who the plight dare tell,
Of the good steed he loves so well ?"
Gaping for fear and ruth, they saw
The charger panting on his straw ;
Till one, who would seem wisest, cried—
" What else but evil could betide,
With that cursed Palmer for our guide ?

Better we had through mire and bush
Been lantern-led by Friar Rush."

II.

Fitz-Eustace, who the cause but guess'd,
Nor wholly understood,
His comrades' clamorous complaints suppress'd ;
He knew Lord Marmion's mood.
Him, ere he issued forth, he sought,
And found deep plunged in gloomy thought,
And did his tale display
Simply, as if he knew of nought
To cause such disarray.
Lord Marmion gave attention cold,
Nor marvell'd at the wonders told—
Pass'd them as accidents of course,
And bade his clarions sound to horse.

III.

Young Henry Blount, meanwhile, the cost
Had reckon'd with their Scottish host ;
And, as the charge he cast and paid,
" Ill thou deserv'st thy hire," he said ;
" Dost see, thou knave, my horse's plight ?
Fairies have ridden him all the night,
And left him in a foam !
I trust that soon a conjuring band,
With English cross and blazing brand,
Shall drive the devils from this land,
To their infernal home :
For in this haunted den, I trow,
All night they trample to and fro."
The laughing host look'd on the hire—
" Gramercy, gentle southern squire,

And if thou comest among the rest,
With Scottish broadsword to be blest,
Sharp be the brand, and sure the blow,
And short the pang to undergo."
Here stay'd their talk—for Marmion
Gave now the signal to set on.
The Palmer showing forth the way,
They journey'd all the morning day.

IV.

The greensward way was smooth and good,
Through Humble's and through Saltoun's wood;
A forest glade, which, varying still,
Here gave a view of dale and hill,
There narrower closed, till, overhead,
A vaulted screen the branches made.
"A pleasant path," Fitz-Eustace said,
"Such as where errant-knights might see
Adventures of high chivalry;
Might meet some damsel flying fast,
With hair unbound and looks aghast;
And smooth and level course were here,
In her defence to break a spear.
Here, too, are twilight nooks and dells;
And oft, in such, the story tells,
The damsel kind, from danger freed,
Did grateful pay her champion's meed."
He spoke to cheer Lord Marmion's mind:
Perchance to show his lore design'd;
For Eustace much had pored
Upon a huge romantic tome,
In the hall-window of his home,
Imprinted at the antique dome
Of Caxton, or De Worde.

Therefore he spoke—but spoke in vain,
For Marmion answer'd nought again.

V.

Now sudden, distant trumpets shrill,
In notes prolong'd by wood and hill,
Were heard to echo far ;
Each ready archer grasp'd his bow,
But by the flourish soon they know
They breathed no point of war.
Yet cautious, as in foeman's land,
Lord Marmion's order speeds the band,
Some opener ground to gain ;
And scarce a furlong had they rode,
When thinner trees, receding, show'd
A little woodland plain.
Just in that advantageous glade,
'The halting troop a line had made,
As forth from the opposing shade
Issued a gallant train.

VI.

First came the trumpets, at whose clang
So late the forest echoes rang ;
On prancing steeds they forward press'd,
With scarlet mantle, azure vest ;
Each at his trump a banner wore,
Which Scotland's royal scutcheon bore :
Heralds and pursuivants, by name
Bute, Islay, Marchmont, Rothesay, came
In painted tabards, proudly showing
Gules, Argent, Or, and Azure glowing,
Attendant on a King-at-arms,

Whose hand the armorial truncheon held
That feudal strife had often quell'd,
When wildest its alarms.

VII.

He was a man of middle age ;
In aspect manly, grave, and sage,
As on King's errand come ;
But in the glances of his eye,
A penetrating, keen, and sly
Expression found its home ;
The flash of that satiric rage,
Which, bursting on the early stage,
Branded the vices of the age,
And broke the keys of Rome.
On milk-white palfrey forth he paced ;
His cap of maintenance was graced
With the proud heron-plume.
From his steed's shoulder, loin, and breast,
Silk housings swept the ground,
With Scotland's arms, device, and crest,
Embroider'd round and round.
The double tressure might you see,
First by Achaius borne,
The thistle and the fleur-de-lis,
And gallant unicorn.
So bright the King's armorial coat,
That scarce the dazzled eye could note,
In living colours, blazon'd brave,
The Lion, which his title gave :
A train which well beseem'd his state,
But all unarm'd, around him wait.

Still is thy name in high account,
And still thy verse has charms,
Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,
Lord Lion King-at-arms !

VIII.

Down from his horse did Marmion spring,
Soon as he saw the Lion-King ;
For well the stately Baron knew
To him such courtesy was due,
Whom Royal James himself had crown'd,
And on his temples placed the round
Of Scotland's ancient diadem :
And wet his brow with hallow'd wine,
And on his finger given to shine
The emblematic gem.
Their mutual greetings duly made,
The Lion thus his message said :—
" Though Scotland's King hath deeply swore
Ne'er to knit faith with Henry more,
And strictly hath forbid resort
From England to his royal court ;
Yet, for he knows Lord Marmion's name,
And honours much his warlike fame,
My liege hath deem'd it shame, and lack
Of courtesy, to turn him back ;
And, by his order, I, your guide,
Must lodging fit and fair provide,
Till finds King James meet time to see
The flower of English chivalry."

IX.

Though inly chafed at this delay,
Lord Marmion bears it as he may.

The Palmer, his mysterious guide,
Beholding thus his place supplied,
Sought to take leave in vain ;
Strict was the Lion King's command,
That none, who rode in Marmion's band,
Should sever from the train :
" England has here enow of spies
In Lady Heron's witching eyes ; "
To Marchmount thus, apart, he said,
But fair pretext to Marmion made.
The right-hand path they now decline,
And trace against the stream the Tyne.

X.

At length up that wild dale they wind,
Where Crichtoun Castle crowns the bank ;
For there the Lion's care assign'd
A lodging meet for Marmion's rank.
That Castle rises on the steep
Of the green vale of Tyne :
And far beneath, where slow they creep,
From pool to eddy, dark and deep,
Where alders moist, and willows weep,
You hear her streams repine.
The towers in different ages rose ;
Their various architecture shows
The builders' various hands ;
A mighty mass that could oppose,
When deadliest hatred fired its foes,
The vengeful Douglas bands.

XI.

Crichtoun ! though now thy miry court
But pens the lazy steer an' sheep,
Thy turrets rude, and totter'd Keep,

Have been the minstrel's loved resort.
 Oft have I traced, within thy fort,
 Of mouldering shields the mystic sense,
 Emblems of honour, or pretence,
 Quarter'd in old armorial sort,
 Remains of rude magnificence.
 For wholly yet had time defaced
 Thy lordly gallery fair ;
 Nor yet the stony cord unbraced,
 Whose twisted knots, with roses laced,
 Adorn thy ruin'd stair.
 Still rises unimpair'd below,
 The court-yard's graceful portico ;
 Above its cornice, row and row
 Of fair hewn facets richly show
 Their pointed diamond form,
 Though there but houseless cattle go,
 To shield them from the storm.
 And, shuddering, still may we explore,
 Where oft whilom were captives pent,
 The darkness of thy Massy More ;
 Or, from thy grass-grown battlement,
 May trace, in undulating line,
 The sluggish mazes of the Tyne.

XII.

Another aspect Crichtoun show'd,
 As through its portal Marmion rode ;
 But yet 'twas melancholy state
 Received him at the outer gate ;
 For none were in the castle then
 But women, boys, or aged men.
 With eyes scarce dried, the sorrowing dame,
 To welcome noble Marmion, came ;

Her son, a stripling twelve years old,
 Proffer'd the Baron's rein to hold ;
 For each man that could draw a sword
 Had march'd that morning with their lord,
 Earl Adam Hopburn, he who died
 On Flodden, by his sovereign's side.
 Long may his Lady look in vain !
 She ne'er shall see his gallant train
 Come sweeping back through Crichtoun-Dean.
 'Twas a brave race, before the name
 Of hated Bothwell stain'd their fame.

XIII.

And here two days did Marmion rest,
 With every rite that honour claims,
 Attended as the King's own guest :—
 Such the command of Royal James,
 Who marshall'd then his land's array,
 Upon the Borough-moor that lay.
 Perchance he would not foeman's eye
 Upon his gathering host should spy,
 Till full prepared was every band
 To march against the English land.
 Here while they dwelt, did Lindsay's wit
 Oft cheer the Baron's moodier fit ;
 And, in his turn, he knew to prize
 Lord Marmion's powerful mind, and wise—
 Train'd in the lore of Rome and Greece,
 And policies of war and peace.

XIV.

It chanced, as tell the second night,
 That on the battlements they walk'd,

And, by the slowly fading light,
 Of varying topics talk'd ;
 And, unaware, the Herald-bard
 Said, Marmion might his toil have spared,
 In travelling so far ;
 For that a messenger from heaven
 In vain to James had counsel given
 Against the English war ;
 And, closer question'd, thus he told
 A tale, which chronicles of old
 In Scottish story have enroll'd :—

XV.

SIR DAVID LINDESAY'S TALE.

“ Of all the palaces so fair,
 Built for the royal dwelling,
 In Scotland, far beyond compare
 Linlithgow is excelling ;
 And in its park in jovial June,
 How sweet the merry linnet's tune,
 How blithe the blackbird's lay !
 The wild-buck bells from ferny brake,
 The coot dives merry on the lake,
 The saddest heart might pleasure take
 To see all nature gay.
 But June is to our sovereign dear
 The heaviest month in all the year :
 Too well his cause of grief you know,
 June saw his father's overthrow.
 Woe to the traitors, who could bring
 The princely boy against his King !
 Still in his conscience burns the sting.
 In offices as strict as Lent,
 King James's June is ever spent.

XVI.

“ When last this ruthful month was come,
And in Linlithgow's holy dome
The King, as wont, was praying ;
While, for his royal father's soul,
The chanters sung, the bells did toll,
The Bishop mass was saying—
For now the year brought round again
The day the luckless king was slain—
In Katherine's aisle the Monarch knelt,
With sackcloth-shirt and iron belt,
And eyes with sorrow streaming ;
Around him in their stalls of state,
The Thistle's Knight-Companions sate,
Their banners o'er them beaming.
I too was there, and, sooth to tell,
Bedeafen'd with the jangling knell,
Was watching where the sunbeams fell,
Through the stain'd casement gleaming :
But, while I mark'd what next befell,
It seem'd as I were dreaming.
Stepp'd from the crowd a ghostly wight,
In azure gown, with cincture white ;
His forehead bald, his head was bare,
Down hung at length his yellow hair.—
Now, mock me not, when, good my Lord,
I pledge to you my knightly word,
That, when I saw his placid grace,
His simple majesty of face,
His solemn bearing, and his pace
So stately gliding on—
Seem'd to me ne'er did limner paint
So just an image of the Saint

Who propp'd the Virgin in her faint—
The loved Apostle John !

XVII.

"He stepp'd before the Monarch's chair,
And stood with rustic plainness there,
And little reverence made ;
Nor head, nor body, bow'd nor bent,
But on the desk his arm he leant,
And words like these he said,
In a low voice, but never tone
So thrill'd through vein, and nerve, and bone :--
'My mother sent me from afar.
Sir King, to warn thee not to war—
Woe waits on thine array ;
If war thou wilt, of women fair,
Her witching wiles and wanton snare,
James Stuart, doubly warn'd, beware :
God keep thee as he may !'
The wondering Monarch seem'd to seek
For answer, and found none ;
And when he raised his head to speak
The monitor was gone.
The marshal and myself had cast
To stop him as he outward pass'd ;
But, lighter than the whirlwind's blast,
He vanish'd from our eyes,
Like sunbeam on the billow cast,
That glances but, and dies."

XVIII.

While Lindesay told his marvel strange,
The twilight was so pale,
He mark'd not Marmion's colour change,
While listening to the tale ;

But, after a suspended pause,
The Baron spoke :—" Of Nature's laws
So strong I held the force,
That never superhuman cause
Could e'er control their course.
And, three days since, had judged your aim
Was but to make your guest your game.
But I have seen, since past the Tweed,
What much has changed my sceptic creed,
And made me credit aught."—He staid,
And seem'd to wish his words unsaid :
But, by that strong emotion press'd,
Which prompts us to unload our breast,
Even when discovery's pain,
To Lindesay did at length unfold
The tale his village host had told,
At Gifford, to his train.
Naught of the Palmer says he there,
And nought of Constance, or of Clare :
The thoughts, which broke his sleep, he seems
To mention but as feverish dreams.

XIX.

" In vain," said he, " to rest I spread
My burning limbs, and couch'd my head :
Fantastic thoughts return'd ;
And, by their wild dominion led,
My heart within me burn'd.
So sore was the delirious goad,
I took my steed, and forth I rode,
And, as the moon shone bright and cold,
Soon reach'd the camp upon the wold.
The southern entrance I pass'd through,
And halt'd, and my bugle blew.

Methought an answer met my ear—
Yet was the blast so low and drear,
So hollow, and so faintly blown,
It might be echo of my own.

XX.

“Thus judging, for a little space
I listen’d, ere I left the place ;
But scarce could trust my eyes,
Nor yet can think they served me true,
When sudden in the ring I view,
In form distinct of shape and hue,
A mountain champion rise.—
I’ve fought, Lord-Lion, many a day,
In single fight, and mix’d affray,
And ever, I myself may say,
Have borne me as a knight ;
But when this unexpected foe
Seem’d starting from the gulf below—
I care not though the truth I show—
I trembled with affright ;
And as I placed in rest my spear,
My hand so shook for very fear,
I scarce could couch it right.

XXI.

“Why need my tongue the issue tell ?
We ran our course—my charger fell ;—
What could he ’gainst the shock of hell ?—
I roll’d upon the plain.
High o’er my head, with threatening hand,
The spectre shook his naked brand—
Yet did the worst remain ;

My dazzled eyes I upward cast—
 Not opening hell itself could blast
 Their sight, like what I saw !
 Full on his face the moonbeam strook—
 A face could never be mistook !
 I knew the stern vindictive look,
 And held my breath for awe.
 I saw the face of one who, fled
 To foreign climes, has long been dead—
 I well believe the last ;
 For ne'er, when vizor raised, did stare
 A human warrior, with a glare
 So grimly and so ghast.
 Thrice o'er my head he shook the blade ;
 But when to good Saint George I pray'd
 (The first time e'er I ask'd his aid),
 He plunged it in his sheath ;
 And, on his courser mounting light,
 He seem'd to vanish from my sight :
 The moonbeam dropp'd, and deepest night
 Sunk down upon the heath.—
 'Twere long to tell what cause I have
 To know his face, that met me there,
 Call'd by his hatred from the grave,
 To cumber upper air ;
 Dead or alive, good cause had he
 To be my mortal enemy."

XXII.

Marvell'd Sir David of the Mount :
 Then, learn'd in story, 'gan recount
 Such chance had happ'd of old,
 When once, near Norham, there did fight
 A spectre fell of fiendish might,

R-R

In likeness of a Scottish knight,
With Brian Bulmer bold,
And train'd him nigh to disallow
The aid of his baptismal vow.
"And such a phantom, too, 'tis said,
With Highland broadsword, targe, and plaid,
And fingers, red with gore,
Is seen in Rothiemurcus glade,
Or where the sable pine-trees shade
Dark Tomantoul, and Auchnaslaid,
Dromouchty, or Glenmore.
And yet, whate'er such legends say,
Of warlike demon, ghost, or fay,
On mountain, moor, or plain,
Spotless in faith, in bosom bold,
True son of chivalry should hold
These midnight terrors vain ;
For seldom have such spirits power
To harm, save in the evil hour,
When guilt we meditate within,
Or harbour unrepented sin."—
Lord Marmion turned him half aside,
And twice to clear his voice he tried,
Then press'd Sir David's hand—
But nought, at length, in answer said ;
And here their farther converse staid,
Each ordering that his band
Should bowne them with the rising day,
To Scotland's camp to take their way.—
Such was the King's command.

XXIII.

Early they took Dun-Edin's road,
And I could trace each step they trode.

Hill, brook, nor dell, nor rock, nor stone,
Lies on the path to me unknown.
Much might it boast of storied lore ;
But, passing such digression o'er,
Suffice it that the route was laid
Across the furzy hills of Braid.
They passed the glen and scanty rill,
And climbed the opposing bank, until
They gained the top of Blackford Hill.

XXIV.

Blackford ! on whose uncultured breast,
Among the broom, and thorn, and whin,
A truant-boy, I sought the nest,
Or listed, as I lay at rest,
While rose, on breezes thin,
The murmur of the city crowd,
And, from his steeple jangling loud,
Saint Giles's mingling din.
Now, from the summit to the plain,
Waves all the hill with yellow grain ;
And o'er the landscape as I look,
Nought do I see unchanged remain,
Save the rude cliffs and chiming brook.
To me they make a heavy moan,
Of early friendships past and gone.

XXV.

But different far the change has been
Since Marmion, from the crown
Of Blackford, saw that martial scene
Upon the bent so brown :
Thousand pavilions, white as snow,

Spread all the Borough-moor below,
Upland, and dale, and down :—
A thousand did I say ? I ween
Thousands on thousands there were seen,
That chequer'd all the heath between
The streamlet and the town ;
In crossing ranks extending far,
Forming a camp irregular ;
Oft giving way, where still there stood
Some relics of the old oak wood,
That darkly huge did intervene,
And tamed the glaring white with green :
In these extended lines there lay
A martial kingdom's vast array.

XXVI.

For from Hebudes, dark with rain,
To eastern Lodon's fertile plain,
And from the Southern Redswire edge,
To farthest Rosse's rocky ledge ;
From west to east, from south to north,
Scotland sent all her warriors forth.
Marmion might hear the mingled hum
Of myriads up the mountain come ;
The horses' tramp, the tingling clank,
Where chiefs review'd their vassal rank,
And charger's shrilling neigh ;
And see the shifting lines advance,
While frequent flash'd, from shield to lance,
The sun's reflected ray.

XXVII.

Thin curling in the morning air,
The wreathes of failing smoke declare

To embers now the brands decay'd,
Where the night-watch their fires had made.
They saw, slow rolling on the plain,
Full many a baggage-cart and wain,
And dire artillery's clumsy car,
By sluggish oxen tugg'd to war;
And there were Borthwick's Sisters Seven,
And culverins which France had given.
Ill-omen'd gift ! the guns remain
The conqueror's spoil on Flodden plain.

XXVIII.

Nor mark'd they less, where in the air
A thousand streamers flaunted fair;
Various in shape, device, and hue,
Green, sanguine, purple, red, and blue,
Broad, narrow, swallow-tail'd, and square,
Scroll, pennon, pensil, bandrol, there
O'er the pavilions flew.
Highest and midmost, was descried
The royal banner floating wide;
The staff, a pine-tree, strong and straight,
Pitch'd deeply in a massive stone,
Which still in memory is shown,
Yet bent beneath the standard's weight
When'er the western wind unroll'd,
With toil, the huge and cumbrous fold,
And gave to view the dazzling field,
Where, in proud Scotland's royal shield,
The ruddy lion ramp'd in gold.

XXIX.

Lord Marmion view'd the landscape bright—
He view'd it with a chief's delight—

Until within him burn'd his heart,
 And lightning from his eye did part,
 As on the battle-day ;
 Such glance did falcon never dart,
 When stooping on his prey.
 " Oh ! well, Lord-Lion, hast thou said,
 Thy King from warfare to dissuade
 Were but in vain essay :
 For, by St. George, were that host mine,
 Not power infernal nor divine,
 Should once to peace my soul incline,
 Till I had dimm'd their armour's shine
 In glorious battle-fray !"
 Answer'd the Bard, of milder mood :
 " Fair is the sight—and yet 'twere good
 That kings would think withal,
 When peace and wealth their land has bless'd,
 'Tis better to sit still at rest,
 Than rise, perchance to fall."

XXX.

Still on the spot Lord Marmion stay'd,
 For fairer scene he ne'er survey'd.
 When sated with the martial show
 That peopled all the plain below,
 The wandering eye could o'er it go,
 And mark the distant city glow
 With gloomy splendour red ;
 For on the smoke-wreathes, huge and slow,
 That round her sable turrets flow,
 The morning beams were shed,
 And tinged them with a lustre proud,
 Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.
 Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,

Where the huge Castle holds its state,
And all the steep slope down,
Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
Piled deep and massy, close and high,
Mine own romantic town !
But northward far, with purer blaze,
On Ochil mountains fell the rays,
And as each heathy top they kiss'd,
It gleam'd a purple amethyst.
Yonder the shores of Fife you saw ;
Here Preston-Bay and Berwick-Law :
And, broad between them roll'd,
The gallant Firth the eye might note,
Whose islands on its bosom float,
Like emeralds chased in gold.
Fitz-Eustace' heart felt closely pent ;
As if to give his rapture vent,
The spur he to his charger lent,
And raised his bridle hand,
And, making demi-volte in air,
Cried, " Where's the coward that would not dare
To fight for such a land ! "
The Lindesay smiled his joy to see ;
Nor Marmion's frown repress'd his glee.

XXXI.

Thus while they look'd, a flourish proud
Where mingled trump and clarion loud,
And fife, and kettle-drum,
And sackbut deep, and psaltery,
And war-pipe with discordant cry,
And cymbal clattering to the sky,
Making wild music bold and high,
Did up the mountain come ;

The whilst the bells, with distant chime,
 Merrily told the hour of prime,
 And thus the Lindesay spoke :
 " Thus clamour still the war-notes when
 The king to mass his way has ta'en,
 Or to St. Katharine's of Sienne,
 Or Chapel of Saint Rocque.
 To you they speak of martial fame ;
 But me remind of peaceful game,
 When blither was their cheer,
 Thrilling in Falkland-woods the air,
 In signal none his steed should spare,
 But strive which foremost might repair
 To the downfall of the deer.

XXXII.

" Nor less," he said—" when looking forth,
 I view yon Empress of the North
 Sit on her hilly throne ;
 Her palace's imperial bowers,
 Her castle, proof to hostile powers,
 Her stately halls and holy towers—
 Nor less," he said, " I moan,
 To think what woe mischance may bring,
 And how these merry bells may ring,
 The death-dirge of our gallant king ;
 Or with the larum call
 The burghers forth to watch and ward,
 'Gainst Southern sack and fires to guard
 Dun-Edin's leaguer'd wall.—
 But not for my presaging thought,
 Dream conquest sure, or cheaply bought !
 Lord Marmion, I say nay ;

God is the guider of the field,
He breaks the champion's spear and shield—
But thou thyself shalt say,
When joins yon host in deadly stowre,
That England's dames must weep in bower,
Her monks the death-mass sing;
For never saw'st thou such a power
Led on by such a King."
And now, down winding to the plain,
The barriers of the camp they gain,
And there they made a stay.—
There stay the Minstrel, till he fling
His hand o'er every Border string,
And fit his harp the pomp to sing
Of Scotland's ancient Court and King,
In the succeeding lay.

CANTO FIFTH.

THE COURT.

I.

THE train has left the hills of Braid ;
The barrier guard have open made
(So Lindesay bade) the palisade,
That closed the tented ground ;
Their men the warders backward drew,
And carried pikes as they rode through,
Into its ample bound.
Fast ran the Scottish warriors there,
Upon the Southern band to stare,
And envy with their wonder rose,
To see such well-appointed foes ;

Such length of shafts, such mighty bows,
 So huge, that many simply thought,
 But for a vaunt such weapons wrought ;
 And little deem'd their force to feel,
 Through links of mail, and plates of steel,
 When rattling upon Flodden vale,
 The cloth-yard arrows flew like hail.

II.

Nor less did Marmion's skilful view
 Glance every line and squadron through ;
 And much he marvell'd one small land
 Could marshal forth such various band :
 For men-at-arms were here,
 Heavily sheathed in mail and plate,
 Like iron towers for strength and weight,
 On Flemish steeds of bone and height,
 With battle-axe and spear.
 Young knights and squires, a lighter train,
 Practised their chargers on the plain,
 By aid of leg, of hand, and rein,
 Each warlike feat to show,
 To pass, to wheel, the croupe to gain,
 And high curvett, that not in vain
 The sword sway might descend amain
 On foeman's casque below.
 He saw the hardy burghers there
 March arm'd, on foot, with faces bare,
 For vizor they wore none,
 Nor waving plume, nor crest of knight ;
 But burnished were their corslets bright,
 Their brigantines, and gorgets light,
 Lil a very silver shone,

Long pikes they had for standing fight,
Two-handed swords they wore,
And many wielded mace of weight,
And bucklers bright they bore.

III.

On foot the yeoman too, but dress'd
In his steel-jack, a swarthy vest,
With iron quilted well ;
Each at his back (a slender store)
His forty days' provision bore,
As feudal statutes tell.
His arms were halbert, axe, or spear,
A crossbow there, a hagbut here,
A dagger-knife, and brand.
Sober he seem'd, and sad of cheer,
As loth to leave his cottage dear,
And march to foreign strand ;
Or musing, who would guide his steer,
To till the fallow land.
Yet deem not in his thoughtful eye
Did aught of dastard terror lie ;
More dreadful far his ire,
Than theirs, who, scorning danger's name,
In eager mood to battle came,
Their valour like light straw on flame,
A fierce but fading fire.

IV.

Not so the Borderer:—bred to war,
He knew the battle's din afar,
And joy'd to hear it swell.
His peaceful day was slothful ease ;
Nor harp, nor pipe, his ear could please
Like the loud slogan yell.

On active steed, with lance and blade,
 The light-arm'd pricker plied his trade—
 Let nobles fight for fame ;
 Let vassals follow where they lead,
 Burghers to guard their townships bleed,
 But war's the Borderer's game.
 Their gain, their glory, their delight,
 To sleep the day, maraud the night,
 O'er mountain, moss, and moor ;
 Joyful to fight they took their way,
 Scarce caring who might win the day,
 Their booty was secure.

These, as Lord Marmion's train pass'd by,
 Look'd on at first with careless eye,
 Nor marvell'd aught, well taught to know
 The form and force of English bow.
 But when they saw the Lord array'd
 In splendid arms and rich brocade,
 Each Borderer to his kinsman said—

“ Hist, Ringan ! seest thou there !
 Canst guess which road they'll homeward ride ?—
 O ! could we but on Border side,
 By Eusedale glen, or Liddell's tide,
 Beset a prize so fair !
 That fangless Lion, too, their guide,
 Might chance to lose his glistening hide ;
 Brown Maudlin, of that doublet pied,
 Could make a kirtle rare.”

V.

Next, Marmion mark'd the Celtic race,
 Of different language, form, and face,
 A various race of man ;

Just then the Chiefs their tribes array'd,
And wild and garish semblance made,
The chequer'd trews, and belted plaid,
And varying notes the war-pipes bray'd,
To every varying clan ;
Wild through their red or sable hair
Look'd out their eyes with savage stare,
On Marmion as he pass'd ;
Their legs above the knee were bare ;
Their frame was sinewy, short, and spare,
And harden'd to the blast ;
Of taller race, the chiefs they own
Were by the eagle's plumage known.
The hunted red-deer's undress'd hide
Their hairy buskins well supplied ;
The graceful bonnet deck'd their head :
Back from their shoulders hung the plaid ;
A broadsword of unwieldy length,
A dagger proved for edge and strength,
A studded targe they wore,
And quivers, bows, and shafts—but, O !
Short was the shaft, and weak the bow,
To that which England bore.
The Isles-men carried at their backs
The ancient Danish battle-axe.
They raised a wild and wondering cry,
As with his guide rode Marmion by.
Loud were their clamouring tongues, as when
The clanging sea-fowl leave the fen,
And, with their cries discordant mix'd,
Grumbled and yell'd the pipes betwixt.

VI.

Thus through the Scottish camp they pass'd,
And reach the City gate at last,
Where all around, a wakeful guard,
Arm'd burghers kept their watch and ward.
Well had they cause of jealous fear,
When lay encamped, in field so near,
The Borderer and the Mountaineer.
As through the bustling streets they go,
All was alive with martial show :
At every turn, with dinning clang,
The armourer's anvil clash'd and rang ;
Or toil'd the swarthy smith, to wheel
The bar that arms the charger's heel ;
Or axe, or falchion, to the side
Of jarring grindstone was applied.
Page, groom, and squire, with hurrying pace,
Through street, and lane, and market-place,
Bore lance, or casque, or sword ;
While burghers, with important face,
Described each new-come lord,
Discuss'd his lineage, told his name,
His following, and his warlike fame.
The Lion led to lodging meet,
Which high o'erlook'd the crowded street ;
There must the Baron rest,
Till past the hour of vesper tide,
And then to Holy-Rood must ride—
Such was the King's behest.
Meanwhile the Lion's care assigns
A banquet rich, and costly wines,
To Marmion and his train ;
And when the appointed hour succeeds,

The Baron dons his peaceful weeds,
And following Lindesay as he leads,
The palace-halls they gain.

VII.

Old Holy-Rood rung merrily
That night, with wassell, mirth, and glee ;
King James within her princely bower
Feasted the Chiefs of Scotland's power,
Summon'd to spend the parting hour ;
For he had charged, that his array
Should southward march by break of day.
Well loved that splendid monarch aye
The banquet and the song,
By day the tourney, and by night
The merry dance, traced fast and light,
The maskers quaint, the pageant bright,
The revel loud and long.
This feast outshone his banquets past,
It was his blithest—and his last.
The dazzling lamps, from gallery gay,
Cast on the Court a dancing ray ;
Here to the harp did minstrels sing ;
There ladies touch'd a softer string ;
With long-ear'd cap, and motley vest,
The licensed fool retail'd his jest ;
His magic tricks the juggler plied ;
At dice and draughts the gallants vied ;
While some, in close recess apart,
Courted the ladies of their heart,
Nor courted them in vain ;
For often, in the parting hour,
Victorious Love asserts his power
O'er coldness and disdain ;

And flinty is her heart, can view
To battle march a lover true—
Can hear, perchance, his last adieu,
Nor own her share of pain.

VIII.

Through this mix'd crowd of glee and game,
The King to greet Lord Marmion came,
While, reverent, all made room.
An easy task it was, I trow,
King James's manly form to know,
Although, his courtesy to show,
He doff'd to Marmion bending low,
His broider'd cap and plume.
For royal was his garb and mien,
His cloak, of crimson velvet piled,
Trimm'd with the fur of martin wild ;
His vest of changeful satin sheen,
The dazzled eye beguiled ;
His gorgeous collar hung adown,
Wrought with the badge of Scotland's crown,
The thistle brave, of old renown :
His trusty blade, Toledo right,
Descended from a baldric bright ;
White were his buskins, on the heel
His spurs inlaid of gold and steel ;
His bonnet, all of crimson fair,
Was button'd with a ruby rare :
And Marmion deem'd he ne'er had seen
A prince of such a noble mien.

IX.

The monarch's form was middle size ;
For feat of strength, or exercise,
Shaped in proportion fair ;

And hazel was his eagle eye,
 And auburn of the darkest dye
 His short curl'd beard and hair.
 Light was his footstep in the dance,
 And firm his stirrup in the lists ;
 And, oh ! he had that merry glance,
 That seldom lady's heart resists.
 Lightly from fair to fair he flew,
 And loved to plead, lament, and sue ;—
 Suit lightly won, and short-lived pain,
 For monarchs seldom sigh in vain.
 I said he joy'd in banquet bower ;
 But, 'mid his mirth, 'twas often strange,
 How suddenly his cheer would change,
 His look o'ercast and lower,
 If, in a sudden turn, he felt
 The pressure of his iron belt,
 That bound his breast in penance pain,
 In memory of his father slain.
 Even so 'twas strange how, evermore,
 Soon as the passing pang was o'er
 Forward he rush'd, with double glee,
 Into the stream of revelry :
 Thus, dim-seen object of affright
 Startles the courser in his flight,
 And half he halts, half springs aside ;
 But feels the quickening spur applied,
 And, straining on the tighten'd rein,
 Scours doubly swift o'er hill and plain.

X.

O'er James's heart, the courtiers say,
 Sir Hugh the Heron's wife held sway :
 To Scotland's Court she came,
 S-s

To be a hostage for her lord,
Who Cessford's gallant heart had gored,
And with the King to make accord,
Had sent his lovely dame.
Nor to that lady free alone
Did the gay King allegiance own ;
For the fair Queen of France
Sent him a turquoise ring and glove,
And charged him, as her knight and love,
For her to break a lance ;
And strike three strokes with Scottish brand,
And march three miles on Southron land,
And bid the banners of his band
In English breezes dance.
And thus, for France's Queen he drest
His manly limbs in mailed vest ;
And thus admitted English fair
His inmost counsels still to share ;
And thus for both he madly plann'd
The ruin of himself and land !
And yet, the sooth to tell,
Nor England's fair, nor France's Queen,
Were worth one pearl-drop, bright and sheen,
From Margaret's eyes that fell—
His own Queen Margaret, who, in Lithgow's
bower,
All lonely sat, and wept the weary hour.

XI.

The Queen sits lone in Lithgow pile,
And weeps the weary day
The war against her native soil,
Her Monarch's risk in battle broil :—

And in gay Holy-Rood, the while,
 Dame Heron rises with a smile
 Upon the harp to play.
 Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er
 The strings her fingers flew ;
 And as she touch'd and tuned them all,
 Even her bosom's rise and fall
 Was plainer given to view ;
 For, all for heat, was laid aside
 Her wimple, and her hood untied.
 And first she pitch'd her voice to sing,
 Then glanced her dark eye on the King,
 And then around the silent ring ;
 And laugh'd, and blush'd, and oft did say
 Her pretty oath, by Yea and Nay,
 She could not, would not, durst not play !
 At length upon the harp, with glee,
 Mingled with arch simplicity,
 A soft, yet lively, air she rung,
 While thus the wily lady sung : --

XII.

LOCHINVAR.

LADY HERON'S SONG.

O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
 Through all the wide Border his steed was the best ;
 And, save his good broadsword, he weapon had none,
 He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone.
 So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
 There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stay'd not for brake, and he stopp'd not for stone,
 He swam the Esk river where ford there was none ;

But ere he alighted at Netherby gate
 The bride had consented, the gallant came late :
 For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
 Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,
 Among bride's-men, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:
 Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword
 (For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word),
 "O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
 Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"—

"I long woo'd your daughter, my suit you denied ;—
 Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—
 And now am I come, with this loss love of mine,
 To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
 There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
 That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar."

The bride kiss'd the goblet: the knight took it up,
 He quaff'd off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
 She look'd down to blush, and she look'd up to sigh,
 With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye,
 He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar—
 "Now tread we a measure!" said young Lochinvar.

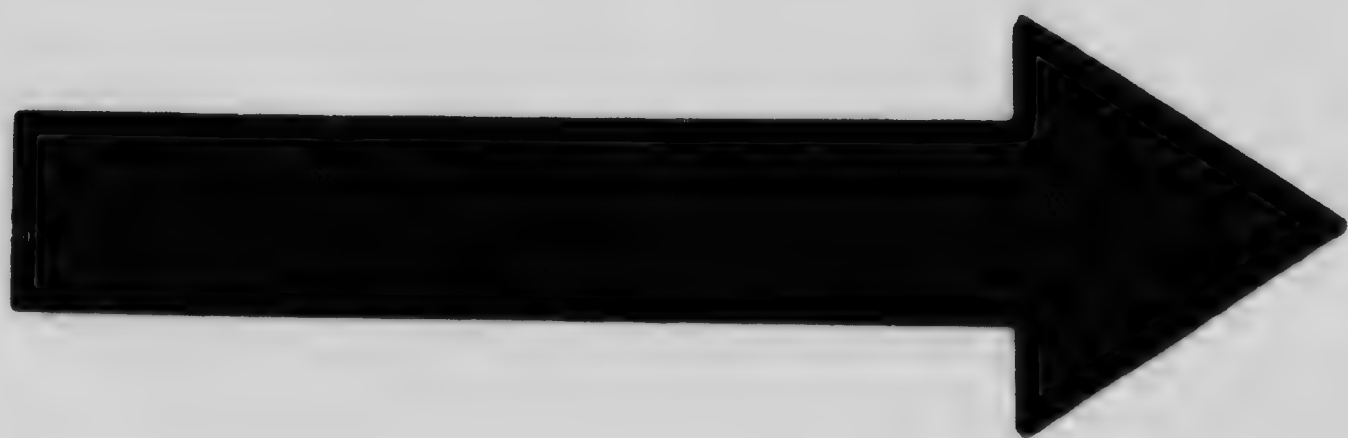
So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
 That never a hall such a galliard did grace ;
 While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
 And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and
 plume ;
 And the bride-maidens whisper'd, "'Twere better
 by far
 To have match'd our fair cousin with young Lochinvar."

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
 When they reach'd the hall-door, and the charger
 stood near ;
 So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
 So light to the saddle before her he sprung !
 "She is won ! we are gone, over bank, bush, and
 scur ;
 They'll have fleet steeds that follow," quoth young
 Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Grames of the Netherby
 clan ;
 Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and
 they ran ;
 There was racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee,
 But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
 So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
 Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar ?

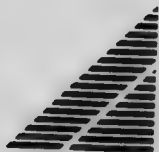
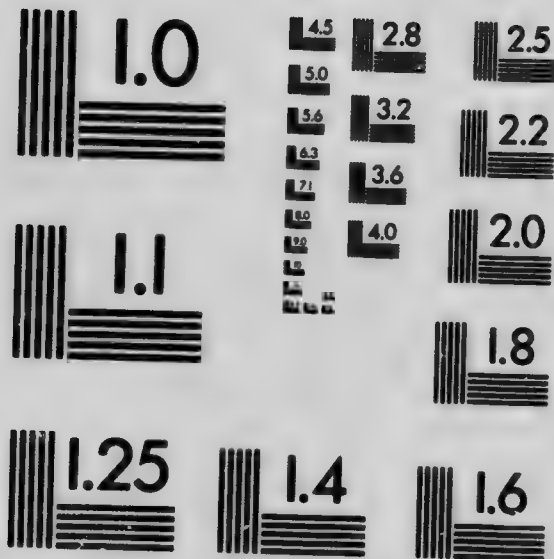
XIII.

The Monarch o'er the siren hung
 And beat the measure as she sung ;
 And, pressing closer and more near,
 He whisper'd praises in her ear.
 In loud applause the courtiers vied ;
 And ladies wink'd, and spoke aside
 The witching dame to Marmion threw
 A glance, where seem'd to reign
 The pride that claims applauses due,
 And of her royal conquest too,
 A real or feign'd disdain :
 Familiar was the look, and told
 Marmion and she were friends of old.



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The King observed their meeting eyes
With something like displeased surprise ;
For monarchs ill can rivals brook,
Even in a word, or smile, or look.
Straight took he forth the parchment broad,
Which Marmion's high commission show'd :
" Our Borders sack'd by many a raid,
Our peaceful liege-men robb'd," he said :
" On day of truce our Warden slain,
Stout Barton kill'd, his vassals ta'en—
Unworthy were we here to reign,
Should these for vengeance cry in vain ;
Our full defiance, hate, and scorn,
Our herald has to Henry borne."

XIV.

He paused, and led where Douglas stood,
And with stern eye the pageant view'd :
I mean that Douglas, sixth of yore,
Who coronet of Angus bore,
And, when his blood and heart were high,
Did the third James in camp defy,
And all his minions led to die
On Lauder's dreary flat :
Princes and favourites long grew tame,
And trembled at the homely name
Of Archibald Bell-the-Cat ;
The same who left the dusky vale
Of Hermitage in Liddesdale,
Its dungeons, and its towers,
Where Bothwell's turrets brave the air,
And Bothwell bank is blooming fair.
To fix his princely bowers.

Though now, in age, he had laid down
His armour for the peaceful gown,
And for a staff his brand,
Yet often would flash forth the fire
That could, in youth, a monarch's ire
And minions' pride withstand ;
And even that day, at council board,
Unapt to soothe his sovereign's mood,
Against the war had Angus stood,
And chafed his royal lord.

XV.

His giant-form, like ruin'd tower,
Though fall'n its muscles' brawny vaunt,
Huge-boned, and tall, and grim, and gaunt,
Seem'd o'er the gaudy scene to lower :
His locks and beard in silver grew ;
His eyebrows kept their sable hue.
Near Douglas when the Monarch stood,
His bitter speech he thus pursued :
" Lord Marmion, since these letters say
That in the North you needs must stay,
While slightest hopes of peace remain,
Uncourteous speech it were, and stern,
To say—Return to Lindisfarne,
Until my herald come again.—
Then rest you in Tantallon Hold :
Your host shall be the Douglas bold—
A chief unlike his sires of old.
He wears their motto on his blade,
Their blazon o'er his towers display'd ;
Yet loves his sovereign to oppose
More than to face his country's foes.

And, I bethink me, by St. Stephen,
But e'en this morn to me was given
A prize, the first-fruits of the war,
Ta'en by a galley from Dunbar,
A bevy of the maids of Heaven.
Under your guard, these holy maids
Shall safe return to cloister shades,
And, while they at Tantallon stay,
Requiem for Cochran's soul may say."
And, with the slaughter'd favourite's name,
Across the Monarch's brow there came
A cloud of ire, remorse, and shame.

XVI.

In answer nought could Angus speak ;
His proud heart swell'd well-nigh to break :
He turn'd aside, and down his cheek
A burning tear there stole.
His hand the Monarch sudden took,
That sight his kind heart could not brook
"Now, by the Bruce's soul,
Angus, my hasty speech forgive !
For sure as doth his spirit live,
As he said of the Douglas old,
I well may say of you—
That never king did subject hold,
In speech more free, in war more bold,
More tender and more true :
Forgive me, Douglas, once again."—
And, while the King his hand did strain,
The old man's tears fell down like rain.
To seize the moment Marmion tried,
And whisper'd to the King aside

" Oh ! let such tears unwonted plead
For respite short from dubious deed !
A child will weep a bramble's smart,
A maid to see her sparrow part,
A stripling for a woman's heart ;
But woe awaits a country, when
She sees the tears of bearded men.
Then, oh ! what omen, dark and high,
When Douglas wets his manly eye ! "

XVII.

Displeased was James, that stranger view'd
And tamper'd with his changing mood.
" Laugh those that can, weep those that may,"
Thus did the fiery Monarch say,
" Southward I march by break of day ;
And if within Tantallon strong,
The good Lord Marmion tarries long,
Perchance our meeting next may fall
At Tamworth, in his castle-hall." —
The haughty Marmion felt the taunt,
And answer'd, grave, the royal vaunt :
" Much honour'd were my humble home,
If in its halls King James should come ;
But Nottingham has archers good,
And Yorkshire men are stern of mood ;
Northumbrian prickers wild and rude.
On Derby Hills the paths are steep ;
In Ouse and Tyne the fords are deep ;
And many a banner will be torn,
And many a knight to earth be borne,
And many a sheaf of arrows spent,
Ere Scotland's King shall cross the Trent.

Yet pause, brave Prince, while yet you may !"—
The Monarch lightly turn'd away,
And to his nobles loud did call—
" Lords, to the dance—a hall ! a hall ! "
Himself his cloak and sword flung by,
And led Dame Heron gallantly ;
And minstrels, at the royal order,
Rung out—" Blue Bonnets o'er the Border."

XVIII.

Leave we these revels now, to tell
What to Saint Hilda's maids befell,
Whose galley, as they sail'd again
To Whitby, by a Scot was ta'en.
Now at Dun-Edin did they bide,
Till James should of their fate decide ;
And soon, by his command,
Were gently summon'd to prepare
To journey under Marmion's care,
As escort honour'd, safe, and fair,
Again to English land.
The Abbess told her chaplet o'er,
Nor knew which saint she should implore,
For, when she thought of Constance, sore
She fear'd Lord Marmion's mood.
And judge what Clara must have felt !
The sword that hung in Marmion's tent,
Had drunk De Wilton's blood.
Unwittingly, King James had given,
As guard to Whitby's shades,
The man most dreaded under Heaven
By these defenceless maids :

Yet what petition could avail,
Or who would listen to the tale
Of woman, prisoner, and nun,
'Mid bustle of a war begun ?
They deem'd it hopeless to avoid
The convoy of their dangerous guide.

XIX.

Their lodging, so the King assign'd,
To Marmion's, as their guardian, join'd ;
And thus it fell, that, passing nigh,
The Palmer caught the Abbess' eye,
Who warn'd him by a scroll,
She had a secret to reveal,
That much concern'd the Church's weal,
And health of sinner's soul ;
And, with deep charge of secrecy,
She named a place to meet,
Within an open balcony,
That hung from dizzy pitch, and high,
Above the stately street ;
To which, as common to each home,
At night they might in secret come.

XX.

At night, in secret, there they came,
The Palmer and the holy Dame,
The moon among the clouds rode high,
And all the city hum was by.
Upon the street, where late before
Did din of war and warriors roar,
You might have heard a pebble fall,

A beetle hum, a cricket sing,
 An owlet flap his boding wing
 On Giles's steeple tall.
 The antique buildings, climbing high,
 Whose Gothic frontlets sought the sky,
 Were here wrapt deep in shade ;
 There on their brows the moon-beam broke,
 Through the faint wreaths of silvery smoke,
 And on the casements play'd.
 And other light was none to see,
 Save torches gliding far,
 Before some chieftain of degree,
 Who left the royal revelry
 To bowne him for the war.—
 A solemn scene the Abbess chose ;
 A solemn hour, her secret to disclose.

XXI.

"O, holy Palmer !" she began—
 "sure he must be sainted man,
 Whose blessed feet have trod the ground
 Where the Redeemer's tomb is found—
 For His dear Church's sake, my tale
 Attend, nor deem of light avail,
 Though I must speak of worldly love—
 How vain to those who wed above !—
 De Wilton and Lord Marmion woo'd
 Clara de Clare, of Gloster's blood
 (Idle it were of Whitby's dame,
 To say of that same blood I came) ;
 And once, when jealous rage was high,
 Lord Marmion said despitiously,
 Wilton was traitor in his heart,
 And had made league with Martin Swart,

When he came here on Simnel's part ;
 And only cowardice did restrain
 His rebel aid on Stokefield's plain—
 And down he threw his glove :—the thing
 Was tried, as wont, before the King ;
 Where frankly did De Wilton own
 That Swart in Gueldres he had known :
 And that between them then there went
 Some scroll of courteous compliment.
 For this he to his castle sent ;
 But when his messenger return'd,
 Judge how De Wilton's fury burn'd !
 For in his packet there were laid
 Letters that claim'd disloyal aid,
 And proved King Henry's cause betray'd.
 His fame, thus blighted, in the field
 He strove to clear by spear and shield ;—
 To clear his fame in vain he strove,
 For wonderous are His ways above !
 Perchance some form was unobserved ;
 Perchance in prayer, or faith, he swerved ;
 Else how could guiltless champion quail,
 Or how the blessed ordeal fail ?

XXII.

“ His squire, who now De Wilton saw
 As recreant door'd to suffer law,
 Repentant, own'd in vain,
 That, while he had the scrolls in care,
 A stranger maiden, passing fair,
 Had drenched him with a beverage rare ;
 His words, no faith could gain.
 With Clare alone he credence won,
 Who, rather than wed Marmion,

Did to Saint Hilda's shrine repair,
 To give our house her livings fair
 And die a vestal vot'ress there.
 The impulse from the earth was given,
 But bent her to the paths of heaven.
 A purer heart, a lovelier maid,
 Ne'er shelter'd her in Whitby's shade,
 No, not since Saxon Edelfled ;
 Only one trace of earthly strain,
 That for her lover's loss
 She cherishes a sorrow vain,
 And murmurs at the cross.—
 And then her heritage—it goes
 Along the banks of Tame ;
 Deep fields of grain the reaper mows,
 In meadows rich the heifer lows,
 The falconer and huntsman knows
 Its woodlands for the game.
 Shame were it to Saint Hilda dear,
 And I, her false vot'ress here,
 Should do a deadly sin,
 Her temple spoil'd before mine eyes,
 If this false Marmion such a prize
 By my consent should win ;
 Yet hath our boisterous monarch sworn
 That Clare shall from our house be torn,
 And grievous cause have I to fear
 Such mandate doth Lord Marmion bear.

XXIII.

“ Now, prisoner, helpless, and betray'd
 To evil power, I claim thine aid,
 By every step that thou hast trod

To holy shrine and grotto dim,
 By every martyr's tortured limb,
 By angel, saint, and seraphim,
 And by the Church of God !
 For mark : When Wilton was betray'd,
 And with his squire forged letters laid,
 She was, alas ! that sinful maid,
 By whom the deed was done—
 O ! shame and horror to be said—
 She was a perjured nun !
 No clerk in all the land, like her,
 Traced quaint and varying character.
 Perchance you may a marvel deem,
 That Marmion's paramour
 (For such vile thing she was) should scheme
 Her love 's nuptial hour ;
 But o'er him thus she hoped to gain,
 As privy to his honour's stain,
 Illimitable power :
 For this she secretly retain'd
 Each proof that might the plot reveal,
 Instructions with his hand and seal ;
 And thus Saint Hilda deign'd,
 Through sinner's perfidy impure,
 Her house's glory to see
 And Clare's immortal we

XXIV.

"'Twere long, and needless, here to tell,
 How to my hand these papers fell ;
 With me they must not stay
 Saint Hilda keep her Abbess true !
 Who knows what outrage he must do,
 While journeying by the way

O, blessed Saint, if e'er again
 I venturous leave thy calm domain,
 To travel or by land or main,
 Deep penance may I pay !—
 Now, saintly Palmer, mark my prayer :
 I give this packet to thy care,
 For thee to stop they will not dare ;
 And O ! with cautious speed,
 To Wolsey's hand the papers bring,
 That he may show them to the King :
 And, for thy well-earn'd meed,
 Thou holy man, at Whitby's shrine
 A weekly mass shall still be thine,
 While priests can sing and read.—
 What ail'st thou !—Speak ! " For as he took
 The charge, a strong emotion shook
 His frame ; and, ere reply,
 They heard a faint, yet shrilly tone,
 Like distant clarion feebly blown,
 That on the breeze did die ;
 And long the Abbess shriek'd in fear,
 " Saint Withold, save us !—What 's here ?
 Look at yon City Cross !
 See on its battled tower appear
 Phantoms, that scutcheons seem to rear,
 And blazon'd banners toss ! "

XXV.

Dun-Edin's Cross, a pillar'd stone,
 Rose on a turret octagon
 (But now is razed that monument,
 Whence royal edict rang,

And voice of Scotland's law was sent
 In glorious trumpet-clang.
 'T' be his tomb as lead to lead,
 Upon its dull destroyer's head !
 (A minstrel's malison is said).
 Then on its battlements they saw
 A vision, passing Nature's law,
 Strange, wild, and dimly seen ;
 Figures that seem'd to rise and die,
 Gibber and sign, advance and fly,
 While nought confirm'd could ear or eye
 Discern of sound or mien.
 Yet darkly did it seem, as there
 Heralds and Pursuivants prepare,
 With trumpet sound and blazon fair,
 A summons to proclaim ;
 But indistinct the pageant proud,
 As fancy forms of midnight cloud,
 When flings the moon upon her shroud
 A wavering tinge of flame ;
 It flits, expands, and shifts, till loud,
 From midmost of the spectre crowd,
 This awful summons came :

XXVI.

" Prince, prelate, potentate, and peer,
 Whose names I now shall call,
 Scottish, or foreigner, give ear ;
 Subjects of him who sent me here,
 At his tribunal to appear,
 I summon you and all :
 I cite you by each deadly sin,
 That e'er hath soil'd your hearts within :
 T.T.

I cite you by each brutal lust,
That e'er defiled your earthly dust—
By wrath, by pride, by fear,
By each o'ermastering passion's tone,
By the dark grave, and dying groan !
When forty days are pass'd and gone,
I cite you, at your Monarch's throne,
To answer and appear."—
Then thunder'd forth a roll of names :
The first was thine, unhappy James !
Then all thy nobles came ;
Crawford, Glencairn, Montrose, Argyle,
Ross, Bothwell, Forbes, Lennox, Lyle—
Why should I tell their separate style ?
Each chief of birth and fame,
Of Lowland, Highland, Border, Isle,
Fore-doom'd to Flodden's carnage pile,
Was cited there by name ;
And Marmion, Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye ;
De Wilton, erst of Aberley,
The self-same thundering voice did say—
But then another spoke :
" Thy fatal summons I deny,
And thine infernal Lord defy,
Appealing me to Him on High,
Who burst the sinner's yoke."
At that dread accent, with a scream,
Parted the pageant like a dream,
The summoner was gone.
Prone on her face the Abbess fell,
And fast, and fast, her beads did tell ;
Her nuns came, startled by the yell,
And found her there alone.

She mark'd not, at the scene aghast,
What time, or how, the Palmer pass'd.

XXVII.

Shift we the scene.—The camp doth move,
Dun-Edin's streets are empty now,
Save when, for weal of those they love,
To pray the prayer, and vow the vow,
The tottering child, the anxious fair,
The grey-hair'd sire, with pious care,
To chapels and to shrines repair.—
Where is the Palmer now ? and where
The Abbess, Marmion, and Clare ?
Bold Douglas ! to Tantallon fair
They journey in thy charge :
Lord Marmion rode on his right hand,
The Palmer still was with the band .
Angus, like Lindesay, did command
That none should roam at large.
But in that Palmer's altered mien
A wondrous change might now be seen,
Freely he spoke of war,
Of marvels wrought by single hand,
When lifted for a native land ;
And still look'd high, as if he plann'd
Some desperate deed afar.
His courser would he feed and stroke,
And, tucking up his sable frocke,
Would first his metal bold provoke,
Then soothe or quell his pride.
Old Hubert said, that never one
He saw, except Lord Marmion,
A steed so fairly ride.

XXVIII.

Some half-hour's march behind, there came,
By Eustace govern'd fair,
A troop escorting Hilda's Dame,
With all her nuns, and Clare.
No audience had Lord Marmion sought ;
Ever he fear'd to aggravate
Clara de Clare's suspicious hate ;
And safer 'twas, he thought,
To wait till, from the nuns removed,
The influence of kinsmen loved,
And suit by Henry's self approved,
Her slow consent had wrought.
His was no flickering flame, that dies
Unless when fann'd by looks and sighs,
And lighted oft at lady's eyes ;
He long'd to stretch his wide command
O'er luckless Clara's ample land :
Besides, when Wilton with him vied,
Although the pang of humbled pride
The place of jealousy supplied,
Yet conquest by that meanness won
He almost loath'd to think upon,
Led him, at times, to hate the cause
Which made him burst through honour's laws.
If e'er he loved, 'twas her alone,
Who died within that vault of stone.

XXIX.

And now, when close at hand they saw
North Berwick's town, and lofty Law,
Fitz-Eustace bade them pause awhile,
Before a venerable pile,

Whose turrets view'd, afar,
The lofty Bass, the Lambie Isle,
The ocean's peace or war.
At tolling of a bell, forth came
The convent's venerable Dame,
And pray'd Saint Hilda's Abbess rest
With her, a loved and honour'd guest,
Till Douglas should a bark prepare
To waft her back to Whitby fair.
Glad was the Abbess, you may guess,
And thanked the Scottish Prioress ;
And tedious were to tell, I ween,
The courteous speech that pass'd between.
O'erjoyed, the nuns their palfreys leave ;
But when fair Clara did intend,
Like them, from horseback to descend,
Fitz-Eustace said, " I grieve,
Fair lady, grieve e'en from my heart,
Such gentle company to part ;—
Think not discourtesy,
But lords' commands must be obey'd ;
And Marmion and the Douglas said,
That you must wend with me.
Lord Marmion hath a letter broad,
Which to the Scottish Earl he show'd,
Commanding that, beneath his care,
Without delay you shall repair
To your good kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare."

XXX.

The startled Abbess loud exclaim'd ;
But she, at whom the blow was aim'd,
Grew pale as death and cold as lead—
She deem'd she heard her d' ath-doom read.

"Cheer thee, my child!" the Abbess said,
"They dare not tear thee from my hand,
To ride alone with armed band."
"Nay, holy mother, nay,"
Fitz-Eustace said, "the lovely Clare
Will be in Lady Angus' care,
In Scotland while we stay;
And, when we move, an easy ride
Will bring us to the English side,
Female attendance to provide
Befitting Gloster's heir:
Nor thinks nor dreams my noble lord,
By slightest look, or act, or word,
To harass Lady Clare.
Her faithful guardian he will be,
Nor sue for slightest courtesy
That e'en to stranger falls,
Till he shall place her, safe and free,
Within her kinsman's halls."
He spoke, and blush'd with earnest grace;
His faith was painted on his face,
And Clare's worst fear relieved.
The Lady Abbess loud exclaim'd
On Henry, and the Douglas blamed,
Entreated, threaten'd, grieved;
To martyr, saint, and prophet pray'd,
Against Lord Marmion inveigh'd,
And call'd the Prioress to aid,
To curse with candle, bell, and book.
Her head the grave Cistercian shook:
"The Douglas, and the King," she said,
"In their commands will be obey'd;
Grieve not, nor dream that harm can fall
The maiden in Tantallon hall."

XXXI.

The Abbess, seeing strife was vain,
Assumed her wonted state again—
For much of state she had—
Composed her veil, and raised her head,
And—"Bid," in solemn voice she said,
"Thy master, bold and bad,
The records of his house turn o'er,
And, when he shall there written see,
That one of his own ancestry
Drove the Monks forth of Coventry,
Bid him his fate explore !
Prancing in pride of earthly trust,
His charger hur!d him to the dust,
And, by a base plebeian thrust,
He died his band before.
God judge 'twixt Marmion and me ;
He is a Chief of high degree,
And I a poor recluse :
Yet oft, in holy writ, we see
Even such weak minister as me
May the oppressor bruise :
For thus, inspired, did Judith slay
The mighty in his sin,
And Jael thus, and Deborah"—
Here hasty Blount broke in :
Fitz-Eustace, we must march our band ;
St. Anton' fire thee ! wilt thou stand
All day, with bonnet in thy hand,
To hear the lady preach ?
By this good light ! if thus we stay,
Lord Marmion, for our fond delay,
Will sharper sermon teach.

Come, don thy cap, and mount thy horse ;
The dame must patience take perforce."

XXXII.

"Submit we then to force," said Clare,
"But let this barbarous lord despair
His purposed aim to win ;
Let him take living, land, and life ;
But to be Marmion's wedded wife
In me were deadly sin :
And if it be the King's decree
That I must find no sanctuary
In that inviolable dome,
Where even a homicide might come,
And safely rest his head,
Though at its open portals stood,
Thirsting to pour forth blood for blood,
The kinsmen of the dead ;
Yet one asylum is my own
Against the dreaded hour ;
A low, a silent, and a lone,
Where kings have little power.
One victim is before me there.—
Mother, your blessing, and in prayer
Remember your unhappy Clare !"
Loud weeps the Abbess, and bestows
Kind blessings many a one :
Weeping and wailing loud arose,
Round patient Clare, the clamorous woes
Of every simple nun.
His eyes the gentle Eustace dried,
And scarce rude Blount the sight could bide,
Then took the squire her rein,

And gently led away her steed,
And, by each courteous word and deed,
To cheer her strove in vain.

XXXIII.

But scant three miles the band had rode,
When o'er a height they passed,
And, sudden, close before them show'd
His towers, Tantallon vast ;
Broad, massive, high, and stretching far,
And held impregnable in war,
On a projecting rock they rose,
And round three sides the ocean flows,
The fourth did battled walls enclose,
And double mound and fosse.
By narrow drawbridge, outworks strong,
Through studded gates, an entrance long,
To the main court they cross.
It was a wide and stately square :
Around were lodgings, fit and fair,
And towers of various form,
Which on the court projected far,
And broke its lines quadrangular.
Here was square keep, there turret high,
Or pinnacle that sought the sky,
Whence oft the warder could descry
The gathering ocean storm.

XXXIV.

Here did they rest. — The princely care
Of Douglas, why should I declare,
Or say they met reception fair ;
Or why the tidings say,

Which, varying, to Tantallon came,
By hurrying posts of fleeter fame,
With ever-varying day !
And, first, they heard King James had won
Etall, and Wark, and Ford : and, then,
That Norham Castle strong was ta'en.
At that sore marvell'd Marmion ;—
And Douglas hoped his monarch's hand
Would soon subdue Northumberland :
But whisper'd news there came,
That, while his host inactive lay,
And melted by degrees away,
King James was dallying off the day
With Heron's wily dame. —
Such acts to chronicles I yield ;
Go seek them there, and see :
Mine is a tale of Flodden Field,
And not a history. —
At length they heard the Scottish host
On that high ridge had made their post,
Which frowns o'er Millfield Plain ;
And that brave Surrey many a band
Had gather'd in the Southern land,
And march'd into Northumberland,
And camp at Wooler ta'en.
Marmion, like charger in the stall,
That hears, without, the trumpet-call,
Began to chafe, and swear :—
“ A sorry thing to hide my head
In castle, like a fearful maid,
When such a field is near !
Needs must I see this battle-day :
Death to my fame if such a fray
Were fought, and Marmion away !

The Douglas, too, I wot not why,
Hath 'bated of his courtesy :
No longer in his halls I'll stay."
Then bade his band they should array
For march against the dawning day.

CANTO SIXTH.

THE BATTLE.

I.

WHILE great events were on the gale,
And each hour brought a varying tale,
And the demeanour, changed and cold,
Of Douglas, fretted Marmion bold,
And, like the impatient steed of war,
He snuff'd the battle from afar ;
And hopes were none, that back again
Herald should come from Terouenne,
Where England's King in leaguer lay,
Before decisive battle-day ;
Whilst these things were, the mournful Clare
Did in the Dame's devotions share :
For the good Countess ceaseless pray'd
To Heaven and Saints, her sons to aid,
And, with short interval, did pass
From prayer to book, from book to mass,
And all in high Baronial pride—
A life both dull and dignified ;
Yet as Lord Marmion nothing press'd
Upon her intervals of rest,

Dejected Clara well could bear
The formal state, the lengthen'd prayer,
Though dearest to her wounded heart
The hours that she might spend apart.

II.

I said, Tantallon's dizzy steep
Hung o'er the margin of the deep.
Many a rude tower and rampart there
Repell'd the insult of the air,
Which when the tempest vex'd the sky,
Half breeze, half spray, came whistling by.
Above the rest, a turret square
Did o'er its Gothic entrance bear,
Of sculpture rude a stony shield ;
The Bloody Heart was in the Field,
And in the chief three mullets stood,
The cognizance of Douglas blood.
The turret held a narrow stair,
Which, mounted, gave you access where
A parapet's embattled row
Did seaward round the castle go.
Sometimes in dizzy steps descending,
Sometimes in narrow circuit bending,
Sometimes in platform broad extending,
Its varying circle did combine
Bulwark, and bartizan, and line,
And bastion, tower, and vantage-coign ;
Above the booming ocean leant
The far-projecting battlement :
The billows burst, in ceaseless flow,
Upon the precipice below.
Where'er Tantallon faced the land,

Gate-works, and walls, were strongly mann'd ;
 No need upon the sea-girt side ;
 The steepy rock, and frantic tide,
 Approach of human step denied ;
 And thus these lines and ramparts rude,
 Were left in deepest solitude.

III.

And, for they were so lonely, Clare
 Would to these battlements repair,
 And muse upon her sorrows there,
 And list the sea-bird's cry ;
 Or slow, like noon-tide ghost, would glide,
 Along the dark-gray bulwarks' side,
 And ever on the heaving tide
 Look down with weary eye.
 Oft did the cliff and swelling main
 Recall the thoughts of Whitby's fane—
 A home she ne'er might see again ;
 For she had laid adown,
 So Douglas bade, the hood and veil,
 And frontlet of the cloister pale,
 And Benedictine gown :
 It were unseemly sight, he said,
 A novice out of convent shade.—
 Now her bright locks, with sunny glow,
 Again adorn'd her brow of snow ;
 Her mantle rich, whose borders, round,
 A deep and fretted broidery bound,
 In golden foldings sought the ground ;
 Of holy ornament, alone
 Remain'd a cross with ruby stone ;
 And often did she look

On that which in her hand she bore,
With velvet bound, and broider'd o'er,
Her breviary book.
In such a place, so lone, so grim,
At dawning pal, on twilight dim,
It fearful would have been
To meet a form so richly dress'd,
With book in hand, and cross on breast,
And such a woeful mien.
Fitz-Eustace, loitering with his bow,
To practice on the gull and crow,
Saw her, at distance, gliding slow,
And did by Mary swear—
Some love-lorn Fay she might have been,
Or, in Romance, some spell-bound Queen ;
For ne'er, in work-day world, was seen
A form so witching fair.

IV.

Once walking thus, at evening tide,
It chanced a gliding sail she spied,
And, sighing thought—"The Abbess, there,
Perchance, does to her home repair ;
Her peaceful rule, where Duty, free,
Walks hand in hand with Charity ;
Where oft Devotion's tranced glow
Can such a glimpse of heaven bestow,
That the enraptured sisters see
High vision and deep mystery ;
The very form of Hilda fair,
Hovering upon the sunny air,
And smiling on her votaries' prayer.
O ! wherefore, to my duller eye,

Did still the Saint her form deny ;
Was it, that, scar'd by sinful scorn,
My heart could neither melt nor burn ?
Or lie my warm affections low,
With him, that taught them first to glow !
Yet, gentle Abbess, well I knew
To pay thy kindness grateful due,
And well could brook the mild command
That ruled thy simple maiden band.
How different now ! condemn'd to bide
My doom from this dark tyrant's pride.—
But Marmion has to learn, ere long,
That constant mind, and hate of wrong,
Descended to a feeble girl
From Red De Clare, stout Gloster's Earl :
Of such a stem, a sapling weak,
He ne'er shall bend, although he break.

V.

" But see ! what makes this armour here ?"—
For in her path there lay
Targe, corslet, helm ;—she view'd them near.—
" The breast-plate pierced !—Ay, much I fear,
Weak fence wert thou 'gainst foeman's spear,
That hath made fatal entrance here,
As these dark blood gouts say.—
Thus Wilton !—Oh ! not corslet's ward,
Not truth, as diamond pure and hard,
Could be thy manly bosom's guard,
On yon disastrous day !"
She raised her eyes in mournful mood—
WILTON himself before her stood !
It might have seem'd his passing ghost,

For every youthful grace was lost ;
And joy unwonted, and surprise,
Gave their strange wildness to his eyes.—
Expect not, noble dames and lords,
That I can tell such scene in words :
What skilful limner e'er would choose
To paint the rainbow's varying hues,
Unless to mortal it were given
To dip his brush in dyes of heaven ?
Far less can my weak line declare
Each changing passion's shade ;
Brightening to rapture from despair,
Sorrow, surprise, and pity there,
And joy, with her angelic air,
And hope, that paints the future fair,
Their varying hues display'd :
Each o'er its rival's ground extending,
Alternate conquering, shifting, blending,
Till all fatigued, the conflict yield,
And mighty Love retains the field.
Shortly I tell what then he said,
By many a tender word delay'd,
And modest blush, and bursting sigh,
And question kind, and fond reply :—

VI.

DE WILTON'S HISTORY.

“ Forget we that disastrous day,
When senseless in the lists I lay.
Thence dragg'd—but how I cannot know,
For sense and recollection fled—
I found me on a pallet low,
Within my ancient beadsman's shed.

Austin—remember'st thou, my Clare,
How thou didst blush, when the old man,
When first our infant love began,
Said we would make a matchless pair?—
Menials, and friends, and kinsmen fled
From the degraded traitor's bed—
He only held my burning head,
And tended me for many a day,
While wounds and fever held their sway.
But far more needful was his care,
When sense returned to wake despair;
For I did tear the closing wound,
And dash me frantic on the ground,
If e'er I heard the name of Clare.
At length, to calmer reason brought,
Much by his kind attendance wrought,
With him I left my native strand,
And, in a Palmer's weeds array'd,
My hated name and form to shade,
I journey'd many a land;
No more a lord of rank and birth,
But mingled with the dregs of earth.
Oft Austin for my reason fear'd,
When I would sit and deeply brood
On dark revenge, and deeds of blood,
Or wild mad schemes uprear'd.
My friend at length fell sick, and said,
God would remove him soon:
And, while upon his dying bed,
He begg'd of me a boon—
If e'er my deadliest enemy
Beneath my brand should conquer'd lie,
Even then my mercy should awake,
And spare his life for Austin's sake.

VII.

“ Still restless as a second Cain,
To Scotland next my route was ta'en,
Full well the paths I knew.
Fame of my fate made various sound,
That death in pilgrimage I found,
That I had perish'd of my wound,
None cared which tale was true ;
And living eye could never guess
De Wilton in his Palmer's dress ;
For now that sable slough is shed,
And trimm'd my shaggy beard and head,
I scarcely know me in the glass.
A chance most wondrous did provide,
That I should be that Baron's guide—
I will not name his name !—
Vengeance to God alone belongs ;
But, when I think on all my wrongs,
My blood is liquid flame !
And ne'er the time shall I forget,
When, in a Scottish hostel set,
Dark looks we did exchange :
What were his thoughts I cannot tell ;
But in my bosom muster'd Hell
Its plans of dark revenge.

VIII.

“ A word of vulgar augury,
That broke from me, I scarce knew why,
Brought on a village tale ;
Which wrought upon his moody sprite,
And sent him armed forth by night.
I borrow'd steed and mail,

And weapons, from his sleeping band ;
 And, passing from a postern door,
 We met, and 'countered hand to hand—
 He fell on Gifford moor.
 For the death-stroke my brand I drew
 (O then my helmed head he knew,
 'The Palmer's cowl was gone),
 Then had three inches of my blade
 The heavy debt of vengeance paid—
 My hand the thought of Austin staid :
 I left him there alone.—
 O good old man ! even from the grave
 Thy spirit could thy master save :
 If I had slain my foeman, ne'er
 Had Whitby's Abbess, in her fear,
 Given to my hand this packet dear,
 Of power to clear my injured fame,
 And vindicate De Wilton's name.—
 Perchance you heard the Abbess tell
 Of the strange pageantry of Hell,
 That broke our secret speech—
 It rose from the infernal shade,
 Or featly was some juggle play'd,
 A tale of peace to tear—
 Appeal to Heaven I judged was best,
 When my name came among the rest.

IX.

" Now here, within Tantallon Hold,
 To Douglas late my tale I told,
 To whom my house was known of old.
 Won by my proofs, his falchion bright
 This eve anew shall dub me knight.

These were the arms that once did turn
 The tide of fight on Otterburne,
 And Harry Hotspur forced to yield,
 When the Dead Douglas won the field.
 These Angus gave—his armourer's care,
 Ere morn shall every breach repair ;
 For nought, he said, was in his halls,
 But ancient armour on the walls,
 And aged chargers in the stalls,
 And women, priests, and grey-hair'd men ;
 The rest were all in Twisel glen.
 And now I watch my armour here,
 By law of arms, till midnight's near ;
 Then, once again a belted knight,
 Seek Surrey's camp with dawn of light.

X.

" There soon again we meet, my Clare !
 This Baron means to guide thee there :
 Douglas reveres his King's command,
 Else would he take thee from his band.
 And there thy kinsman, Surrey, too,
 Will give De Wilton justice due.
 Now meeter far for martial broil,
 Firmer my limbs, and strung by toil,
 Once more "——" O Wilton ! must we then
 Risk new-found happiness again,
 Trust fate of arms once more ?
 And is there not an humble glen,
 Where we, content and poor,
 Might build a cottage in the shade,
 A shepherd thou, and I to aid
 Thy task on dale and moor ?—
 That reddening brow !—too well I know.

Not even thy Clare can peace bestow,
While falsehood stains thy name ;
Go then to fight ! Clare bids thee go !
Clare can a warrior's feelings know,
And weep a warrior's shame ;
Can Red Ear! Gilbert's spirit feel,
Buckle the spurs upon thy heel,
And belt thee with thy brand of steel,
And send thee forth to fame ! "

XI.

That night, upon the rocks and bay,
The midnight moon-beam slumbering lay,
And pour'd its silver light, and pure,
Through loop-hole, and through embrasure,
Upon Tantallon tower and hall ;
But chief where arched windows wide
Illuminate the chapel's pride,
The sober glances fall. [scars,
Much was their need ; though 'seam'd with
Two veterans of the Douglas' wars,
Though two grey priests were there,
And each a blazing torch held high,
You could not by their blaze descry
The chapel's carving fair.
Amid that dim and smoky light,
Chequering the silver moonshine bright,
A bishop by the altar stood,
A noble lord of Douglas blood,
With mitre sheen, and rocquet white.
Yet show'd his meek and thoughtful eye
But little pride of prelacy ;
More pleased that, in a barbarous age,
He gave rude Scotland Virgil's page,

Than that beneath his rule he held
 The bishopric of fair Dunkeld.
 Beside him and Angus stood,
 Doff'd his furr'd gown and sable hood :
 O'er his huge form and visage pale,
 He wore a cap and shirt of mail ;
 And lean'd his large and wrinkled hand
 Upon the huge and sweeping brand
 Which wont of yore, in battle fray,
 His foeman's limbs to shred away,
 As wood-knife lops the sapling spray.
 He seem'd as, from the tombs around
 Rising at judgment-day,
 Some giant Douglas may be found
 In all his old array ;
 So pale his face, so huge his limb,
 So old his arms, his looks so grim.

XII.

Then at the altar Wilton kneels,
 And Clare the spurs bound on his heels ;
 And think what next he must have felt,
 At buckling of the falchion belt !
 And judge how Clara changed her hue,
 While fastening to her lover's side
 A friend, which, though in danger tried,
 He once had found untrue !
 Then Douglas struck him with his blade :
 " Saint Michael and Saint Andrew aid,
 I dub thee knight.
 Arise, Sir Ralph, De Wilton's heir !
 For King, for Church, for Lady fair,
 See that thou fight." —

And Bishop Gawain, as he rose,
Said—"Wilton ! grieve not for thy woes,
Disgrace, and trouble ;
For He, who honour best bestows,
May give thee double."
De Wilton sobb'd, for sob he must—
"Where'er I meet a Douglas, trust
That Douglas is my brother !"—
"Nay, nay," old Angus said, "not so ;
To Surrey's camp thou now must go,
Thy wrongs no longer smother.
I have two sons in yonder field ;
And, if thou meet'st them under shield,
Upon them bravely—do thy worst ;
And foul fall him that blanches first !"

XIII.

Not far advanced was morning day,
When Marmion did his troop array
To Surrey's camp to ride ;
He had safe-conduct for his band,
Beneath the royal seal and hand,
And Douglas gave a guide :
The ancient Earl, with stately grace,
Would Clara on her palfrey place,
And whisper'd in an under tone,
"Let the hawk stoop, his prey is flown."—
The train from out the castle drew,
But Marmion stopp'd to bid adieu :—
"Though something I might plain," he said
'Of cold respect to stranger guest,
Sent hither by your King's behest,
While in Tantallon's towers I staid ;
Part we in friendship from your land,

And, noble Earl, receive my hand."—
But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
Folded his arms, and thus he spoke :—
" My manors, halls, and bowers shall still
Be open, at my Sovereign's will,
To each one whom he lists, howe'er
Unmeet to be the owner's peer.
My castles are my King's alone,
From turret to foundation-stone—
The hand of Douglas is his own ;
And never shall in friendly grasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp."—

XIV.

Burn'd Marmion's swarthy cheek like fire,
And shook his very frame for ire,
And—" This to me ! " he said—
" An 'twere not for thy hoary beard,
Such hand as Marmion's had not spared
To cleave the Douglas' head !
And, first, I tell thee, haughty Peer,
He, who does England's message here,
Although the meanest in her state,
May well, proud Angus, be thy mate :
And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
Even in thy pitch of pride,
Here in thy hold, thy vassals near
(Nay, never look upon your lord,
And lay your hands upon your sword),
I tell thee, thou'rt defied !
And if thou said'st I am not peer
To any lord in Scotland here,
Lowland or Highland, far or near,
Lord Angus, thou hast lied ! "

On the Earl's cheek the flush of rage
O'ercame the ashen hue of age :
Fierce he broke forth—"And darest thou, then,
To beard the lion in his den,

The Douglas in his hall !

And hopest thou hence unscathed to go !—
No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no !
Up drawbridge, grooms—what, Warder, ho !

Let the portcullis fall."

Lord Marmion turn'd—well was his need,
And dash'd the rowels in his steed,
Like arrow through the archway sprung,
The ponderous grate behind him rung :
To pass there was such scanty room,
The bars, descending, razed his plume.

XV.

The steed along the drawbridge flies,
Just as it trembled on the rise ;
Nor lighter does the swallow skim
Along the smooth lake's level brim :
And when Lord Marmion reach'd his band,
He halts, and turns with clenched hand,
And shout of loud defiance pours,
And shook his gauntlet at the towers.
"Horse ! horse !" the Douglas cried, "and chase !"
But soon he reign'd his fury's pace :
"A royal messenger he came,
Though most unworthy of the name.—
A letter forged ! Saint Jude to speed !
Did ever knight so foul a deed !
At first in heart it liked me ill,
When the King praised his clerkly skill.
Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,

Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line.
So swore I, and I swear it still,
Let my boy-bishop fret his fill.—
Saint Mary mend my fiery mood !
Old age ne'er cools the Douglas blood,
I thought to slay him where he stood.
"Tis pity of him too," he cried :
" Bold can he speak, and fairly ride,
I warrant him a warrior tried."
With this his mandate he recalls,
And slowly seeks his castle halls.

XVI.

The day in Marmion's journey wore ;
Yet, ere his passion's gust was o'er,
They cross'd the heights of Stanrig-moor,
His troop more closely there he scan'd,
And miss'd the Palmer from the band.—
" Palmer or not," young Blount did say,
" He parted at the peep of day ;
Good sooth, it was in strange array."
" In what array ?" said Marmion, quick.
" My lord, I ill can spell the trick ;
But all night long, with clink and bang,
Close to my couch did hammers clang ;
At dawn the falling drawbridge rang,
And from a loop-hole while I peep,
Old Bell-the-Cat came from the Keep,
Wrapp'd in a gown of sables fair,
As fearful of the morning air ;
Beneath, when that was blown aside,
A rusty shirt of mail I spied,
By Archibald won in bloody work,
Against the Saracen and Turk ;

Last night it hung not in the hall ;
 I thought some marvel would befall.
 And next I saw them saddled lead
 Old Cheviot forth, the Earl's best steed ;
 A matchless horse, though something old,
 Prompt in his paces, cool and bold.
 I heard the Sheriff Sholto say,
 The Earl did much the Master pray
 To use him on the battle-day ;
 But he preferr'd——" "Nay, Henry, cease !
 Thou sworn horse-courser, hold thy peace.—
 Eustace, thou bear'st a brain—I pray
 What did Blount see at break of day ?"—

XVII.

"In brief, my lord, we both descried
 (For then I stood by Henry's side)
 The Palmer mount, and outwards ride,
 Upon the Earl's own favourite steed :
 All sheathed he was in armour bright,
 And much resembled that same knight,
 Subdued by you in Cotswold fight :
 Lord Angus wish'd him speed."—
 The instant that Fitz-Eustace spoke,
 A sudden light on Marmion broke ;—
 "Ah ! dastard fool, to reason lost !"
 He mutter'd ; "'twas nor fay nor ghost
 I met upon the moonlight wold,
 But living man of earthly mould.—
 O dotage blind and gross !
 Had I but fought as wont, one thrust
 Had laid De Wilton in the dust,
 My path no more to cross.—
 How stand we now !—he told his tale

To Douglas ; and with some avail ;
 'Twas therefore gloom'd his rugged brow.--
 Will Surrey dare to entertain,
 'Gainst Marmion, charge disproved and vain ?
 Small risk of that, I trow.
 Yet Clare's sharp questions must I shun ;
 Must separate Constance from the Nun--
 O, what a tangled web we weave,
 When first we practise to deceive !
 A Palmer too !—no wonder why
 I felt rebuked beneath his eye :
 I might have known there was but one
 Whose look could quell Lord Marmion."

XVIII.

Stung with these thoughts, he urged to speed
 His troop, and reach'd, at eve, the Tweed,
 Where Lennel's convent closed their march.
 (There now is left but one frail arch ;
 Yet mourn thou not its cells :
 Our time a fair exchange has made ;
 Hard by, in hospitable shade,
 A reverend pilgrim dwells,
 Well worth the whole Bernardine brood,
 That e'er wore sandal, frock, or hood.)
 Yet did Saint Bernard's Abbot there
 Give Marmion entertainment fair,
 And lodging for his train and Clare.
 Next morn the Baron climb'd the tower,
 To view afar the Scottish power,
 Encamp'd on Flodden edge :
 The white pavilions made a show,
 Like remnants of the winter snow,
 Along the dusky ridge.

Lord Marmion look'd :—at length his eye
Unusual movement might descry
Amid the shifting lines :
The Scottish host drawn out appears,
For, flashing on the hedge of spears
The eastern sunbeam shines.
Their front, now deepening, now extending ;
Their flank inclining, wheeling, bending,
Now drawing back, and now descending,
The skilful Marmion well could know,
They watch'd the motions of some foe,
Who traversed on the plain below.

XIX.

Even so it was. From Flodden ridge
The Scots beheld the English host
Leave Barmore-wood, their evening post,
And heedful watch'd them as they cross'd
The Till by Twisel Bridge.
High sight it is, and haughty, while
They dive into the deep defile ;
Beneath the cavern'd cliff they fall,
Beneath the castle's airy wall.
By rock, by oak, by hawthorn-tree,
Troop after troop are disappearing ;
Troop after troop their banners rearing,
Upon the eastern bank you see.
Still pouring down the rocky den,
Where flows the sullen Till,
And rising from the dim-wood glen,
Standards on standards, men on men,
In slow succession still,
And, sweeping o'er the Gothic arch,

And pressing on, in ceaseless march,
To gain the opposing hill
That morn, to many a trumpet clang,
Twisel ! thy rocks deep echo rang ;
And many a chief of birth and rank,
Saint Helen ! at thy fountain drank.
Thy hawthorn glade, which now we see
In spring-tide bloom so lavishly,
Had then from many an axe its doom,
To give the marching columns room.

XX.

And why stands Scotland idly now,
Dark Flodden ! on thy airy brow,
Since England gains the pass the while,
And struggles through the deep defile ?
What checks the fiery soul of James ?
Why sits that champion of the dames
Inactive on his steed,
And sees, between him and his land,
Between him and Tweed's southern strand,
His host Lord Surrey lead ?
What 'vails the vain knight-errant's brand ?—
O, Douglas, for thy leading wand !
Fierce Randolph, for thy speed !
O for one hour of Wallace wight,
Or well-skill'd Bruce, to rule the fight,
And cry—" Saint Andrew and our right ! "
Another sight had seen that morn,
From Fate's dark book a leaf been torn,
And Flodden had been Bannockbourne !—
The precious hour has passed in vain.
And England's host has gain'd the plain :

Wheeling their march, and circling still,
Around the base of Flodden hill.

XXI.

Ere yet the bands met Marmion's eye,
Fitz-Eustace shouted loud and high,
"Hark! hark! my lord, an English drum!
And see, ascending squadrons come
Between Tweed's river and the hill,
Foot, horse, and cannon:—hap what hap,
My basnet to a prentice cap,
Lord Surrey's o'er the Till!
Yet more! yet more!—how far array'd
They file from out the hawthorn shade,
And sweep so gallant by:
With all their banners bravely spread,
And all their armour flashing high,
St. George might waken from the dead,
To see fair England's standards fly."—
"Stint in thy prate," quoth Blount, "thou'dst
best,
And listen to our lord's behest."—
With kindling brow Lord Marmion said—
"This instant be our band array'd;
The river must be quickly cross'd,
That we may join Lord Surrey's host.
If fight King James—as well I trust,
That fight he will, and fight he must—
The Lady Clare behind our lines
Shall tarry, while the battle joins."

XXII.

Himself he swift on horseback threw,
Scarce to the Abbot bade adieu;

Far less would listen to his prayer,
To leave behind the helpless Clare.
Down to the Tweed his band he drew,
And mutter'd, as the flood they view,
"The pheasant in the falcon's claw
He scarce will yield to please a daw :
Lord Angus may the Abbot awe,
So Clare shall bide with me."
Then on that dangerous ford, and deep,
Where to the Tweed Leat's eddies creep,
He ventured desperately :
And not a moment will he bide,
Till squire or groom before him ride ;
Headmost of all he stems the tide ;
And stems it gallantly.
Eustace held Clare upon her horse,
Old Hubert led her rein,
Stoutly they braved the cr... course,
And, though far downward... per force,
The southern bank they go ;
Behind them, straggling, came to shore,
As best they might, the train :
Each o'er his head his yew-bow bore,
A caution not in vain ;
Deep need that day that every string,
By wet unharm'd, should sharply ring.
A moment then Lord Marmion staid,
And breathed his steed, his... array'd,
Then forward moved his band,
Until, Lord Surrey's rear-guard won,
He halted by a Cross of Stone.
That, on a hillock standing lone,
Did all the field command.

XXIII.

Hence might they see the full array
Of either host, for deadly fray :
Their marshall'd lines stretch'd east and west,
And fronted north and south,
And distant salutation pass'd
From the loud cannon mouth ;
Not in the close successive rattle,
That breathes the voice of modern battle,
But slow and far between.—
The hillock gain'd, Lord Marmion staid :
" Here, by this Cross," he gently said,
" You well may view the scene.
Here shalt thou tarry, lovely Clare :
O ! think of Marmion in thy prayer !
Thou wilt not ?—well—no less my care
Shall, watchful, for thy weal prepare.—
You, Blount and Eustace, are her guard,
With ten pick'd archers of my train ;
With England if the day go hard,
To Berwick speed amain.—
But if we conquer, cruel maid,
My spoils shall at your feet be laid,
When here we meet again."
He waited not for answer there,
And would not mark the maid's despair,
Nor heed the discontented look
From either squire ; but spurr'd amain,
And, dashing through the battle plain,
His way to Surrey took.

XXIV.

"——The good Lord Marmion, by my life !
Welcome to danger's hour !

X-x

Short greeting serves in time of strife !
Thus have I ranged my power :—
Myself will rule this central host,
Stout Stanley fronts their right,
My sons command the vaward post,
With Brian Tunstall, stainless knight,
Lord Dacre, with his horsemen light,
Shall be in rear-ward of the fight,
And succour those that need it most.
Now, gallant Marmion, well I know,
Would gladly to the vanguard go ;
Edmund, the Admiral, Tunstall there,
With thee their charge will blithely share ;
There fight thine own retainers, too,
Beneath De Burg, thy steward true."
"Thanks, noble Surrey !" Marmion said,
Nor farther greeting there he paid ;
But, parting like a thunderbolt,
First in the vanguard made a halt,
Where such a shout there rose
Of "Marmion ! Marmion !" that the cry,
Up Flodden mountain shrilling high,
Startled the Scottish foes.

XXV.

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still
With Lady Clare upon the hill !
On which (for far the day was spent)
The western sunbeams now were bent.
The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
Could plain their distant comrades view ;
Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
"Unworthy officer here to stay !
No hope of gilded spurs to-day.—"

But see ! look up—on Flodden bent
The Scottish foe has fired his tent."
And sudden, as he spoke,
From the sharp ridges of the hill,
All downward to the banks of Till,
Was wreathed in sable smoke.
Volumed and fast, and rolling far,
The cloud enveloped Scotland's war,
As down the hill they broke !
Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
Announced their march ; their tread alone,
At times one warning trumpet blown,
At times a stifled hum,
Told England, from his mountain-throne
King James did rushing come.—
Scarce could they hear or see their foes,
Until at weapon-point they close.—
They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword-sway, and with lance's thrust ;
And such a yell was there,
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air ;
O life and death were in the shout,
Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
And triumph and despair.

XXVI.

Long look'd the anxious squires ; their eye
Could in the darkness nought descry.
At length the freshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast ;
And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears ;

And in the smoke the pennons flew,
 As in the storm the white sea-mew.
 Then mark'd they, dashing broad and far,
 The broken billows of the war,
 And plumed crests of chieftains brave,
 Floating like foam upon the wave ;

But nought distinct they see :
 Wide rag'd the battle on the plain ;
 Spears shook, and falchions flash'd amain ;
 Fell England's arrow-flight like rain ;
 Crests rose, and stoop'd, and rose again,
 Wild and disorderly.

Amid the scene of tumult, high
 They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly :
 And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
 And Edmund Howard's lion bright,
 Still bear them bravely in the fight ;

Although against them come
 Of gallant Gordons many a one,
 And many a stubborn Highlandman,
 And many a rugged Border clan,
 With Huntly, and with Home.

XXVII.

Far on the left, unseen the while,
 Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle :
 Though there the western mountaineer
 Rush'd with bare bosom on the spear,
 And flung the feeble targe aside,
 And with both hands the broadsword plied.
 'Twas vain :—But Fortune, on the right,
 With fickle smile, cheer'd Scotland's fight.
 Then fell that spotless banner white,
 The Howard's lion fell ;

Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
Around the battle-yell.
The Border slogan rent the sky !
A Home ! a Gordon ! was the cry :
Loud were the clanging blows ;
Advanced, — forced back. — now low, now
high,
The pennon sunk and rose :
As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,
It waver'd mid the foes.
No longer Blount the view could bear ;
" By Heaven, and all its saints ! I swear
I will not see it lost !
Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare
May bid your beads, and patter prayer—
I gallop to the host."
And to the fray he rode amain,
Follow'd by all the archer train.
The fiery youth with desperate charge
Made, for a space, an opening large—
The rescued banner rose—
But darkly closed the war around,
Like pine-tree, rooted from the ground,
It sunk among the foes.
Then Eustace mounted too :—yet staid,
As loth to leave the helpless maid,
When, fast as shaft can fly,
Blood-shot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
The loose rein dangling from his head,
Housing and saddle bloody red,
Lord Marmion's steed rush'd by ;
And Eustace, maddening at the sight,

A look and sign to Clara cast
To mark he would return in haste,
Then plunged into the fight.

XXVIII.

Ask me not what the maiden feels,
Left in that dreadful hour alone ;
Perchance her reason stoops, or reels ;
Perchance a courage, not her own,
Braces her mind to desperate tone.—
The scatter'd van of England wheels :—
She only said, as loud in air
The tumult roar'd, " Is Wilton there ? —"
They fly, or, madden'd by despair,
Fight but to die—" Is Wilton there ? "
With that, straight up the hill there rode
Two horsemen drenched with gore,
And in their arms, a helpless load,
A wounded knight they bore.
His hand still strain'd the broken brand ;
His arms were smear'd with blood and sand.
Dragg'd from among the horses' feet,
With dinted shield, and helmet beat,
The falcon-crest and plumage gone,
Can that be haughty Marmion ! . . .
Young Blount his armour did unlace,
And, gazing on his ghastly face,
Said—" By Saint George, he's gone !
That spear-wound has our master sped,
And see the deep cut on his head !
Good-night to Marmion !"—
" Unnurtured Blount ! thy brawling cease :
He opes his eyes," said Eustace ; " peace ! "

XXIX.

When, doff'd his casque, he felt free air,
Around 'gan Marmion wildly stare :—
"Where's Harry Blount ? Fitz-Eustace where ?
Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare !
Redeem my pennon—charge again !
Cry—'Marmion to the rescue !'—Vain !
Last of my race, on battle-plain
That shout shall ne'er be heard again !
Yet my last thought is England's—fly,
To Dacre bear my signet ring :
Tell him his squadrons up to bring.—
Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey hie :
Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
His life-blood stains the spotless shield.
Edmund is down :—my life is left ;
The Admiral alone is left.
Let Stanley charge with spur & fire—
With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
Full upon Scotland's central host,
Or victory and England's lost.—
Must I bid twice ?—hence, varlets ! fly !
Leave Marmion here alone—to die."
They parted, and alone he lay ;
Clare drew her from the sight away,
Till pain wrung forth a lowly moan,
And half he murmur'd—"Is there not one,
Of all my halls have nursed,
Page, squire, or groom, one cup to bring
Of blessed water from the spring,
To slake my dying thirst ?"

XXX.

O, Woman ! in our hours of ease,
 Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
 And variable as the shade
 By the light quivering aspen made ;
 When pain and anguish wring the brow,
 A ministering angel thou !—
 Scarce were the piteous accents said,
 When, with the Baron's casque, the maid
 To the nigh streamlet ran :
 Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears ;
 The plaintive voice alone she hears,
 Sees but the dying man.
 She stoop'd her by the runnel's side,
 But in abhorrence backward drew ;
 For, oozing from the mountain's side,
 Where raged the war, a dark-red tide
 Was curdling in the streamlet blue.
 Where shall she turn ?—behold her mark
 A little fountain cell,
 Where water, clear as diamond-spark,
 In a stone basin fell.
 Above, some half-worn letters say,
 Drink. weary. pilgrim. drink. and. pray.
 For . the . kind . soul . of . Sybil . Grey .
 Who . built . this . cross . and . well .
 She fill'd the helm, and back she hied,
 And with surprise and joy espied
 A Monk supporting Marmion's head :
 A pious man, whom duty brought,
 To dubious verge of battle fought,
 To shrieve the dying, bless the dead.

XXXI.

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
And, as she stoop'd his brow to lave—
"Is it the hand of Clare," he said,
"Or injured Constance, bathes my head."
Then, as remembrance rose—
"Speak not to me of shrift or prayer!
I must redress her woes.
Short space, few words, are mine to spare;
Forgive and listen, gentle Clare!"—
"Alas!" she said, "the while—
O, think of your immortal weal!
In vain for Constance is your zeal;
She——died at Holy Isle."—
Lord Marmion started from the ground,
As light as if he felt no wound;
Though in the action burst the tide,
In torrents, from his wounded side.
"Then it was truth"—he said—"I knew
That the dark presage must be true.—
I would the Fiend, to whom belongs
The vengeance due to all her wrongs,
Would spare me but a day!
For wasting fire, and dying groan,
And priests slain on the altar-stone,
Might bribe him for delay.
It may not be!—this dizzy trance—
Curse on yon base maurader's lance,
And doubly cursed my failing brand!
A sinful heart makes feeble hand."
Then, fainting, down on earth he sunk,
Supported by the trembling Monk.

XXVII.

With fruitless labour Clara bound,
 And strove to stanch the gushing wound ;
 The Monk, with unavailing cares,
 Exhausted all the Church's prayers.
 Ever, he said, that, close and near,
 A lady's voice was in his ear,
 And that the priest he could not hear,
 For that she ever sung,
*" In the lost battle, borne down by the flying,
 Where mingles war's rattle with groans of the
 dying ! "*

So the notes rung ;—
 " Avoid thee, Fiend !—with cruel hand,
 Shake not the dying sinner's sand !—
 O, look, my son, upon yon sign
 Of the Redeemer's grace divine ;
 O, think on faith and bliss !—
 By many a death-bed I have been,
 And many a sinner's parting seen,
 But never aught like this."—
 The war, that for a space did fail,
 Now trebly thundering swell'd the gale,
 And—STANLEY ! was the cry ;
 A light on Marmion's visage spread,
 And fired his glazing eye ;
 With dying hand, above his head,
 He shook the fragment of his blade,
 And shouted " Victory !—
 Charge, Chester, charge ! On, Stanley, on ! "
 Were the last words of Marmion.

XXXIII.

By this, though deep the evening fell,
 Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
 For still the Scots, around their King,
 Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
 Where's now their victor vaward wing,
 Where Huntly, and where Home!—
 O, for a blast of that dread horn,
 On Fontarabian echoes borne,
 That to King Charles did come,
 When Rowland brave, and Olivier,
 And every paladin and peer,
 On Roncesvalles died!
 Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
 To quit the plunder of the slain,
 And turn the doubtful day again,
 While yet on Flodden side,
 Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
 And round it toils, and bleeds, and dies,
 Our Caledonian pride!
 In vain the wish—for far away,
 While spoil and havoc mark their way,
 Near Sbyil's Cross the plunderers stray.—
 "O, Lady," cried the Monk, "away!"
 And placed her on her steed,
 And led her to the chapel fair,
 Of Tillmouth upon Tweed.
 There all the night they spent in prayer,
 And at the dawn of morning, there
 She met her kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.

XXXIV.

But as they left the dark'ning heath,
More desperate grew the strife of death.
The English shafts in volleys hail'd,
In headlong charge their horse assail'd ;
Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep
To break the Scottish circle deep,
That fought around their King.
But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
Though bill-men ply the ghastly blow,
Unbroken was the ring ;
The stubborn spear-men still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell.
No thought was there of dastard flight ;
Link'd in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well ;
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded King.
Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
Led back from strife his shatter'd bands ;
And from the charge they drew,
As mountain-waves, from wasted lands,
Sweep back to ocean blue.
Then did their loss his foemen know ;
Their King, their Lords, their mightiest low,
They melted from the field as snow,
When streams are swoln and south winds blow
Dissolves in silent dew.

Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless plash,
While many a broken band,
Disorder'd, through her currents dash,
To gain the Scottish land ;
To town and tower, to down and dale,
To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
And raise the universal wail.
Tradition, legend, tune, and song,
Shall many an age that wail prolong :
Still from the sire the son shall hear
Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
Of Flodden's fatal field,
Where shiver'd was fair Scotland's spear.
And broken was her shield !

XXXV.

Day dawns upon the mountain's side :—
There, Scotland ! lay thy bravest pride,
Chiefs, knights, and nobles, many a one :
The sad survivors all are gone.—
View not that corpse mistrustfully,
Defaced and mangled though it be ;
Nor to yon Border Castle high,
Look northward with upbraiding eye ;
Nor cherish hope in vain,
That, journeying far on foreign strand,
The Royal Pilgrim to his land
May yet return again.
He saw the wreck his rashness wrought ;
Reckless of life, he desperate fought,
And fell on Flodden plain ;
And well in death his trusty brand,
Firm clench'd within his manly hand,
Beseem'd the monarch slain.

But, O ! how changed since yon blithe night !—
Gladly I turn me from the sight,
Unto my tale again.

XXXVI.

Short is my tale :—Fitz-Eustace' care
A pierced and mangled body bare
To moated Lichfield's lofty pile ;
And there, beneath the southern aisle,
A tomb, with Gothic sculpture fair,
Did long Lord Marmion's image bear.
(Now vainly for its sight you look ;
'Twas levell'd when fanatic Brook
The fair cathedral storm'd and took ;
But, thanks to Heaven and good Saint Chad,
A guerdon meet the spoiler had !)
There erst was martial Marmion found,
His feet upon a couchant hound,
His hands to heaven upraised ;
And all around, on scutcheon rich,
And tablet carved, and fretted niche,
His arms and feats were blazed.
And yet, though all was carved so fair,
And priest for Marmion breathed the prayer,
The last Lord Marmion lay not there.
From Ettrick woods a peasant swain
Follow'd his lord to Flodden plain—
One of those flowers, whom plaintive lay
In Scotland mourns as "wede away :"
Sore wounded, Sybil's Cross he spied,
And dragg'd him to its foot, and died,
Close by the noble Marmion's side.
The spoilers stripp'd and gash'd the slain,

And thus their corpses were mista'en ;
And thus, in the proud Baron's tomb,
The lowly woodsman took the room.

XXXVII.

Less easy task it were, to show
Lord Marmion's nameless grave, and low.
They dug his grave e'en where he lay,
But every mark is gone ;
Time's wasting hand has done away
The simple Cross of Sibyl Grey,
And broke her font of stone :
But yet from out the little hill
Oozes the slender springlet still.
Oft halts the stranger there,
For thence may best his curious eye
The memorable field descry ;
And shepherd boys repair
To seek the water-flag and rush,
And rest them by the hazel bush,
And plait their garlands fair ;
Nor dream they sit upon the grave
That holds the bones of Marmion brave. —
When thou shalt find the little hill,
With thy heart commune, and be still.
If ever, in temptation strong,
Thou left'st the right path for the wrong ;
If every devious step, thus trod,
Still led thee further from the road ;
Dread thou to speak presumptuous doom
On noble Marmion's lowly tomb ;
But say, " He died a gallant knight,
With sword in hand, for England's right."

XXXVIII.

I do not rhyme to that dull elf,
Who cannot image to himself,
That all through Flodden's dismal night,
Wilton was foremost in the fight ;
That, when brave Surrey's steed was slain,
'Twas Wilton mounted him again ;
'Twas Wilton's brand that deepest hew'd
Amid the spearmen's stubborn wood ;
Unnamed by Hollinshed or Hall,
He was the living soul of all ;
That, after fight, his faith made plain,
He won his rank and lands again ;
And charged his old paternal shield
With bearings won on Flodden Field.
Nor sing I to that simple maid,
To whom it must in terms be said,
That King and kinsmen did agree,
To bless fair Clara's constancy ;
Who cannot, unless I relate,
Paint to her mind the bridal's state ;
That Wolsey's voice the blessing spoke,
More, Sands, and Denny, pass'd the joke ;
That bluff King Hal the curtain drew,
And Catherine's hand the stocking threw ;
And afterwards, for many a day,
That it was held enough to say,
In blessing to a wedded pair,
" Love they like Wilton and like Clare ! "

L'ENVOY.

TO THE READER.

WHY then a final note prolong,
Or lengthen out a closing song,
Unless to bid the gentles speed,
Who long have listed to my rede !
To Statesmen grave, if such may deign
To read the Minstrel's idle strain,
Sound head, clean hand, and piercing wit,
And patriotic heart—as PITT !
A garland for the hero's crest,
And twined by her he loves the best ;
To every lovely lady bright,
What can I wish but faithful knight ?
To every faithful lover too,
What can I wish but lady true ?
And knowledge to the studious sage ;
And pillow to the head of age.
To thee, dear school-boy, whom my lay
Has cheated of thy hour of play,
Light task, and merry holiday !
To all, to each, a fair good night,
And pleasing dreams, and slumbers light !





NOTES.

BALLADS.

"That nun, who ne'er beholds the day."—P. 39.

The circumstance of the nun, "who never saw the day," is not entirely imaginary. About fifty years ago, an unfortunate female wanderer took up her residence in a dark vault among the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey, which, during the day, she never quitted. When night fell, she issued from this miserable habitation, and went to the house of Mr. Haliburton of Newmains, Scott's great-grandfather, or to that of Mr. Erskine of Sheilfield, two gentlemen of the neighbourhood. From their charity she obtained such necessaries as she could be prevailed upon to accept. At twelve each night she lighted her candle, and returned to her vault, assuring her friendly neighbours that during her absence her habitation was arranged by a spirit, to whom she gave the uncouth name of *Fat Lips*; describing him as a little man, wearing heavy iron shoes, with which he trampled the clay floor of the vault to dispel the damps. This circumstance caused her to be regarded by the well-informed with compassion, as deranged in her understanding, and by the vulgar with some degree of terror. The cause of her adopting this extraordinary mode of life she would never explain. It was, however, believed to have been occasioned by a vow, that, during the absence of a man to whom she was attached, she would never look upon the sun. Her lover never returned. He fell during the civil war of 1745-6, and she never more would behold the light of day.

The vault, or rather dungeon, in which this unfortunate woman lived and died, passes still by the name of the super-

natural being with which its gloom was tenanted by her disturbed imagination, and few of the neighbouring peasants dare enter it by night.

"*Where a king lay*," etc., p. 45.—A reference to Alexander III. of Scotland, killed by a fall from his horse, near Kinghorn.

"*O hone a' rie !*" p. 54.—"Alas for the Chief !"

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

"*The Duchess*," p. 75.—Anne of Buccleuch; the same who was married to the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth, son of Charles II., beheaded in 1685 for rebellion against James II.

P. 77.—The ancient barons of Buccleuch, both from feudal splendour and from their frontier situation, retained in their household at Branksome a number of gentlemen of their own name, who held lands from their chief for the military service of watching and warding his castle.

"*Wer't my neck-verse at Hairibee*," p. 86.—Hairibee, the place on Carlisle wall where the moss-troopers, if caught, were hung. The neck-verse was the first verse of Psalm 51. If a criminal claimed on the scaffold "benefit of his clergy," a priest instantly presented him with a Psalter, and he read his neck-verse. The power of reading it entitled him to his life, which was spared; but he was banished the kingdom. See Palgrave's "Merchant and Friar."

"*Haunted by the lonely earn*," p. 119.—The earn is the name of a Scottish eagle.

P. 134.—*A Flemens-firth*, an asylum for outlaws; *March-treason*, the chief species of offence constituting march-treason was the crime of riding, or causing to ride, against the opposite country during the time of truce; *Warrison*, note of assault.

"*Of those dread maids*," p. 172.—The Valkyrior or Scandinavian Fates, or Fatal Sisters.

MARMION.

'*He scatter'd angels round,*' p. 186.—A gold coin of the period, worth about 10s.

'*The victor shore,*' p. 238.—An allusion to the battle of Copenhagen, 1801.

'*Archibald Bell-the-Cat,*' v. 278.—Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, a man remarkable for strength of body and mind, acquired the popular name of Bell-the-Cat upon the following remarkable occasion:—James the Third, of whom Pittscottie complains that he delighted more in music, and "policies of building," than in hunting, hawking, and other noble exercises, was so ill advised as to make favourites of his architects and musicians, whom the same historian irreverently terms masons and fiddlers. His nobility, who did not sympathise in the King's respect for the fine arts, were extremely incensed at the honours conferred on those persons, particularly on Cochrane, a mason, who had been created Earl of Mar; and seizing the opportunity when, in 1482, the King had convoked the whole array of the country to march against the English, they held a midnight council in the church of Lauder, for the purpose of forcibly removing these minions from the King's person. When all had agreed on the propriety of this measure, Lord Gray told the assembly the apologue of the Mice, who had formed a resolution that it would be highly advantageous to their community to tie a bell round the cat's neck, that they might hear her approach at a distance; but which public measure unfortunately miscarried, from no mouse being willing to undertake the task of fastening the bell. "I understand the moral," said Angus, "and that what we propose may not lack execution, I will *bell-the-cat,*"



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